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MAREK WECOWSKI

THE RISE OF THE GREEK ARISTOCRATIC BANQUET



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MAREK WECOWSKI

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All drank in turn from the same goblet, taking no heed of drops of drink that, falling from the whiskers of one, were passed on with the goblet to the next in line. Nor did the fairer sex shrink from pressing their delicate lips against a rim brushed by many foul whiskers before them. But when people began to drink from vessels made of glass, all at once began to revile a cup touched by another's mouth.

Jędrzej Kitowicz, *A Description of Customs in the Reign of Augustus III*
[written *c.*1779–1788] tr. Guy Laycock

The Chian and Thasian man makes pledges from large cups passed to the right, the Athenian from small cups passed to the right, and the Thessalian pledges enormous cups [passed] to whomever he wishes, but the Lakedaimonian drinks individually from the cup at his side; his cup-bearer pours just so much as he might drink.

Kritias of Athens, *BNJ* 338A fr. 10
tr. W. S. Morison

Preface and Acknowledgements

The structure of this book may strike the reader as unusual or even unhelpful, given that my narrative takes leave of chronological order on at least two different levels. Investigating the origins of the Greek aristocratic banquet, I begin with the description of this institution as it was in later periods. Under the heading of 'Defining the Symposion', the first division of this study, composed of Chapters 1 and 2, is entirely devoted to identifying the broad constitutive features of the symposion, proceeding to analyse its origins only after this initial sketch has taken shape. Likewise adopting a retrospective approach, the second division of the study, comprising Chapters 3 to 5 and entitled 'Symposion and History,' turns toward the historical processes in question. The third chapter therefore examines the eighth- and seventh-century archaeological evidence for the existence of the symposion.[1] Staying at the chronological end point of my research, the eighth and seventh centuries BC, the fourth chapter then analyses the oldest non-material evidence for the history of 'Early Greece'—Homeric poetry. With these initial examinations completed, Chapter 5 then turns to earlier periods to discuss the archaeological record and thereby uncover the crystallization of the symposion, drawing on material from the eighth and ninth centuries BC. Particular attention is given to a decisive series of changes that most likely took place no later than the end of the ninth century. Finally, the study concludes with a general explanatory model which strives to capture the relationship between the emergence of the symposion, the formation of a Greek aristocracy, and the most important process in the history of Greece: the rise of the *polis*.

It is my expectation that the study itself will gradually justify the complex structure outlined above and make its necessity evident to readers.

* * *

This work took a very long time to write. During this process, I was fortunate to benefit from the help and support of numerous scholars

[1] If not stated otherwise, all the dates in this book are before the common era.

and many institutions—'I could not tell over the multitude of them nor name them, not if I had ten tongues and ten mouths' (∼ *Il.* II 488–489; tr. R. Lattimore). However, I must mention the unceasing intellectual generosity of Benedetto Bravo, with whom, as with Adam Ziółkowski, I was able to discuss, time and again, the theses of the whole book. No need to add that, although the magnitude of my debt is apparent in many places in the text, neither of them bears responsibility for my errors. At various stages of the work, I was able to discuss different parts of my text, or various aspects of this project, with other scholars. I owe a debt of particular gratitude to Kurt A. Raaflaub and Burkhard Fehr, as well as to Josine Blok, Maria Luisa Catoni, Jan Paul Crielaard, Jarosław Czubaty, Matteo D'Acunto, Maciej Daszuta, Tomasz Gromelski, Marek Janicki, Antonis Kotsonas, Włodzimierz Lengauer, Oswyn Murray, Łukasz Niesiołowski-Spano', Robin Osborne, Floris van den Eijnde, Samuel Verdan, Piotr Węcowski, and Aleksander Wolicki. I owe a great deal to the reviewers of the Polish version of my book: Jerzy Danielewicz, Ryszard Kulesza, Krzysztof Nawotka, and Sławomir Sprawski, to Krystyna Bartol and Anna Stanislavovna Rusyaeva, as well as to the two anonymous Readers for the Oxford University Press. For discussions about the topics included in the work I am also grateful to Judy Barringer, Sean Corner, Alain Duplouy, Andrew Ford, Robert Fowler, Douglas Frame, John Curtis Franklin, Robin Lane Fox, François Lissarrague, Michael Lurje, John Ma, Alexandros Mazarakis Ainian, Gregory Nagy, Robert Parker, Christopher Pelling, Adam Rabinowitz, Pauline Schmitt Pantel, William J. Slater, Krystyna Stebnicka, Marek Stępień, Lech Trzcionkowski, Lina van' t Wout, Stephanie West, and members of the research group *European Network for the History of Ancient Greece*. In the final stage of my work on the English version, I profited immensely from the audiences of two series of lectures I gave at the University of Utrecht and the University of Warsaw. Ewen Bowie, J. P. Crielaard, A. Kotsonas, Jan Kwapisz, Vayos Liapis, Carolina López-Ruiz, O. Murray, A. Rabinowitz, Corinna Riva, Evangelie Simantoni-Bournia, F. van den Eijnde, S. Verdan, and Dimitrios Yatromanolakis shared the results of their unpublished research with me. In addition, M. D'Acunto, Ayelet Gilboa, A. Kotsonas, Vassilis Lambrinoudakis, A. Mazarakis Ainian, E. Simantoni-Bournia, Thierry Theurillat, and S. Verdan communicated valuable information on unpublished archaeological sites to me orally or by mail. A. Filipowska, F. Lissarrague, A. Mazarakis Ainian, E. Simantoni-Bournia, Nicholaos Chr. Stampolidis, Th. Theurillat, and S. Verdan

additionally agreed to the publication of several of their respective photographs, site plans, or drawings. Many colleagues helped me by providing me with books and papers that were inaccessible to me at different stages of work, for which I am very thankful.

The following institutions granted me their generous support as I conducted research on my project: the government of the Republic of France and École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales in Paris; Harvard's Center for Hellenic Studies (Washington, D.C.); Polish-American Kościuszko Foundation and Columbia University in New York City; The Foundation for Polish Science; the munificent Katholieke Universiteit Leuven; the hospitable École française d'Athènes; the Netherlands Institute in Athens; and the Danish Institute in Athens. In the final stage of my work, I also profited from a research grant (12H 12 0193 81) from Poland's National Programme for the Development of Humanities.

The Ashmolean Museum, the University of Oxford, the British Museum, Museo Civico Archeologico di Pithecusae in Villa Arbusto and the Soprintendeza Speciale per i Beni Archeologici di Napoli e Pompei (Ufficio di Pozzuoli), The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, The Wilanów Palace Museum, the *Revue archéologique*, the American School of Classical Studies at Athens: Agora Excavations, and the Swiss School of Archaeology in Greece granted me their permissions to reproduce their pictorial material.

I am also grateful to the Directors of the Institute of History at the University of Warsaw, Maria Koczerska, Dariusz Kołodziejczyk, Bronisław Nowak, and Michał Tymowski, for individual research funds they have granted me over the years, and to the Directors of the Institute for financial support for the publication of this work in its original version.

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Less easily measured, but very important to me is yet another debt of gratitude—I owe it to my colleagues in the Department of Ancient History at the University of Warsaw, for the friendly but critical atmosphere that stimulated me in my work. My patient family knows how much this book owes to them.

I dedicate this work to my Teachers—Benedetto Bravo and Ewa Wipszycka.

M.W.

Warsaw–Paris
January–February 2013

A Postscript

Regrettably, my book was finished too early for me to accommodate in my argument three important recent studies of the symposion: F. Hobden, *The Symposion in Ancient Greek Society and Thought* (Cambridge, 2013); K. M. Lynch, *The Symposium in Context: Pottery from a Late Archaic House near the Athenian Agora*, Hesperia Supp. 46 (Princeton, NJ, 2011); and K. Topper, *The Imagery of the Athenian Symposium* (New York, 2012).

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List of Abbreviations

Note that conventional abbreviations following the usage of *L'Année philologique* (for titles of periodicals), of *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, or of the *Liddell–Scott–Jones Greek Lexicon* (for ancient authors and works) are not included in the list below.

AAASH	*Annales archéologiques arabes syriennes*
ABV	J. D. Beazley, *Attic Black-Figure Vase-Painters* (Oxford, 1956)
AD	*Ἀρχαιολογικὸν Δελτίον*
AE	*Ἀρχαιολογικὴ Εφημηρίς*
AEMTh	*Το Αρχαιολογικό Έργο στη Μακεδονία και Θράκη*
Agora VIII	E. T. H. Brann, *The Athenian Agora*, vol. viii: *Late Geometric and Protoattic pottery* (Princeton, 1965)
AH	*Archaeologia Homerica* (Göttingen, 1967–)
ANET[3]	*Ancient Near Eastern Texts relating to the Old Testament*, 3rd edn with a supplement, ed. J. B. Pritchard (Princeton, 1969)
AR	*Archaeological Reports*
ARV[2]	J. D. Beazley, *Attic Red-Figure Vase-Painters*, 2nd edn, vols. i–iii (Oxford, 1963)
Austin–Bastianini	*Possidippi Pellaei quae supersunt omnia, ediderunt C. Austin, G. Bastianini* (Milan, 2002)
AWE	*Ancient West & East*
BA	Bronze Age
Bacchylides, Snell–Maehler	*Bacchylidis carmina cum fragmentis*, 11th edn. *Post B. Snell edidit H. Maehler* (Munich, 2003)
Beazley Archive	University of Oxford, Classical Art Research Centre, The Beazley Archive: <http://www.beazley.ox.ac.uk/index.htm>
Beekes	R. S. P. Beekes, *Etymological Dictionary of Greek*, vols. i–ii. (Leiden–Boston, 2010)
Bergk[4]	*Poetae lyrici Graeci*, 4th edn, vols. ii and iii, ed. T. Bergk (Leipzig, 1882)

Bernabé	*Poetarum epicorum Graecorum testimonia et fragmenta*, corr. edn, vol. i, ed. A. Bernabé (Leipzig, 1996)
BNJ	Brill's New Jacoby: <http://www.brillonline.nl>
Borysthenes–Berezan	*Borysthenes–Berezan: The 120th Anniversary of Archaeological Investigations on Berezan Island*. The State Hermitage Museum [in Russian, front page in English] (St. Petersburg, 2005)
CAH	*The Cambridge Ancient History* (Cambridge, 1923–)
Calame	*Alcman: Introduction, texte critique, témoignages, tradution et commentaire*, ed. Claude Calame (Rome, 1983)
CAT	*The Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts from Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hani and Other Places*, ed. M. Dietrich, O. Loretz, and J. Sanmartín (Münster, 1995) (original German edn 1976)
CEG	*Carmina epigraphica Graeca saeculorum VIII–V a. Chr. n.* (vol. i); *. . . saeculi IV a. Chr. n.* (vol. ii), ed. P. A. Hansen (Berlin, 1983–1989)
Chantraine	P. Chantraine, *Dictionaire étymologique de la langue grecque: Histoire des mots* (nouvelle édition avec suppl.) (Paris, 1999)
COS I-III	*The Context of Scripture*, vols. i–iii, ed. W. W. Hallo (Leiden–New York, 1997–2002)
CVA	*Corpus vasorum antiquorum*
DA	Dark Ages
Davies	*Epicorum Graecorum fragmenta*, ed. M. Davies (Göttingen, 1988)
DELG	= Chantraine
Dilts	*Heraclidis Lembi Excerpta Politiarum*, ed. and tr. Mervin R. Dilts (Durham, NC, 1971)
DK	*Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, 6th edn, vols. i–iii, ed. H. Diels and W. Kranz (Berlin, 1952–1959)
DNP	*Der Neue Pauly: Enzyklopädie der Antike*, ed. H. Cancik and H. Schneider (Stuttgart, 1996–2003)
Dorandi	*Filodemo: Storia dei filosofi. Platone e l'Academia (PHerc. 1021 e 164)*, ed., trad. e comm. a cura di T. Dorandi (Naples, 1991)

Edelstein–Kidd	*Posidonius*, vols. i–ii, ed. L. Edelstein and I. G. Kidd (Cambridge and New York, 1972–1988)
EG	Early Geometric
EIA	Early Iron Age
EO	Early Orientalizing
EPC	Early Protocorinthian
Eretria III	*Eretria, fouilles et recherches*, vol. iii: *L'Hérôon à la porte de l'ouest*. By C. Bérard (Bern, 1970)
Eretria XVII.1–2	B. Blandin, *Eretria: Fouilles et recherches*, vol. xvii: *Les Pratiques funéraires d'époque géométrique à Érétrie. Espace des vivants, demeures des morts*, fasc. 1 (*Texte*); fasc. 2 (*Catalogue, tableaux, planches*) ([Lausanne], 2007)
FGrHist	*Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*, ed. F. Jacoby (Leiden, 1923–1958; repr. 1954–69)
FHG	*Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum,* vols. i–v, ed. C. Müller, Th. Müller, and V. Langlois (Paris, 1841–1873)
Fortetsa	K. J. Brock, *Fortetsa: Early Greek Tombs near Knossos* (Cambridge, 1957)
G	Geometric
Gentili	*Anacreon*, ed. B. Gentili (Rome, 1958)
G–P	*Poetarum elegiacorum testimonia et fragmenta*, vols. i–ii, ed. B. Gentili and C. Prato (Leipzig, 1979–1985)
Gordion I	R. S. Young, *The Gordion Excavations: Final Reports*, vol. i: *Three Great Tumuli* (Philadelphia, PA, 1981)
gr./grr.	grave/graves[2]
H.	height
HambBeitrA	*Hamburger Beiträge zur Archäologie*
Hansen	*Hesychii Alexandrini Lexicon*, vol. iii: *Π–Σ, editionem post Kurt Latte continuans recensuit et emendavit Peter Allan Hansen* (Berlin–New York, 2005)
Hansen–Cunningham	*Hesychii Alexandrini Lexicon*, vol. iv: *T–Ω, editionem post Kurt Latte continuans recensuerunt et emendaverunt Peter Allan*

[2] Usually followed by a number; at times, the abbreviation might be omitted leaving the site name immediately followed by the tomb number.

	Hansen, Ian C. Cunningham (Berlin–New York, 2009)
Homers Ilias	*Homers Ilias: Gesamtkommentar, auf der Grundlage der Augabe von Ameis-Hentze-Cauer (1868–1913)*, ed. J. Latacz (München–Leipzig, 2000–)
IEG^{2}	= W^2
IG I^2	*Inscriptiones Graecae I: Inscriptiones Atticae Euclidis anno (403/2) anteriores*, 2nd edn, ed. F. Hiller von Gaertringen (Berlin, 1924)
IG II^2	*Inscriptiones Graecae II et III: Inscriptiones Atticae Euclidis anno posteriores*, 2nd edn, Parts i–iii, ed. J. Kirchner (Berlin, 1913–1940)
IG XIV	*Inscriptiones Graecae*, vol. xiv: *Inscriptiones Siciliae et Italiae, additis Galliae, Hispaniae, Britanniae, Germaniae inscriptionibus*, ed. G. Kaibel (Berlin, 1890)
IGASMG I–V	*Iscrizioni greche arcaiche di Sicilia e Magna Grecia*, vols. i–v, ed. R. Arena (Pisa, 1992–2002)
IGDOP	*Inscriptions grecques dialectales d'Olbia du Pont*, ed. L. Dubois (Geneva, 1996)
Iliad I–VI	*The Iliad: A Commentary*, vol. i (*Books 1–4*), G. S. Kirk; vol. ii (*Books 5–8*), G. S. Kirk; vol. iii (*Books 9–12*), B. Hainsworth; vol. iv (*Books 13–16*), R. Janko; vol. v (*Books 17–20*), M. W. Edwards; vol. vi (*Books 21–24*), N. Richardson (Cambridge, 1985–1993)
K–A [*vel PCG*]	*Poetae comici Graeci*, ed. R. Kassel and C. Austin (Berlin, 1986–)
KAI	*Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften*, vol. i, ed. H. Donner and W. Rölling (Wiesbaden, 2002)
Kerameikos IV	K. Kübler, *Kerameikos: Ergebnisse der Ausgrabungen*, vol. iv: *Neufunde aus der Nekropole des 11. und 10. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin, 1943)
Kerameikos V.1	K. Kübler, *Kerameikos: Ergebnisse der Ausgrabungen*, vol. v.1 (*Textband* and *Tafelband*): *Die Nekropole des 10. bis 8. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin, 1954)
Kerameikos VI.1	K. Kübler, *Kerameikos: Ergebnisse der Ausgrabungen*, vol. vi.1 (*Textband* and

	Tafelband): *Die Nekropole des späten 8. bis frühen 6. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin, 1959)
Kerameikos X	W. Hoepfner, *Kerameikos: Ergebnisse der Ausgrabungen*, vol. x: *Das Pompeion und seine Nachfolgerbauten* (Berlin, 1976)
Kerameikos XIII	B. Bohen, *Kerameikos: Ergebnisse der Ausgrabungen*, vol. xiii: *Die geometrischen Pyxiden* (Berlin–New York, 1988)
Kinkel	*Epicorum Graecorum fragmenta*, vol. i, ed. G. Kinkel (Leipzig, 1877)
KNC I–IV	*Knossos North Cemetery: Early Greek Tombs*, vols. i–iv, ed. J. N. Coldstream and H. W. Catling (London, 1996)
Kock	*Comicorum Atticorum fragmenta*, vols. i–iii, ed. T. Kock (Leipzig, 1880–1888)
Koerte	*Menandri quae supersunt*, 3rd edn, vol. i–ii, ed. A. Koerte (Leipzig, 1938–1953)
Leaf I–II	W. Leaf, *The Iliad: Edited, with apparatus criticus, prolegomena, notes, and appendices*, vol. i: *Books I–XII*; vol. ii: *Books XIII–XXIV*, 2nd edn (London, 1900–1902)
Lefkandi I.1–2	M. R. Popham, L. H Sackett, and P. G. Themelis, *Lefkandi I: The Iron Age. The Settlement. The Cemeteries*, Part 1 (*Plates*); Part 2 (*Text*) (London, 1979–1980)
Lefkandi II.1	R. W. V. Catling and I. S. Lemos, *Lefkandi II: The Protogeometric Building at Toumba*, Part 1: *The Pottery* (London, 1990)
Lefkandi II.2	J. Coulton and H. W. Catling, *Lefkandi II: The Protogeometric Building at Toumba*, Part 2: *The Excavation, Architecture and Finds* (London, 1993)
Lefkandi III.2	*Lefkandi III: The Toumba Cemetery. The Excavations of 1981, 1984, 1986 and 1992–4*, Part 2: *Plates*, compiled by M. R. Popham and I. S. Lemos (Athens, 1996)
LfgrE	*Lexikon des frühgriechischen Epos. Begründet von Bruno Snell* (Göttingen, 1955–)
LG	Late Geometric
LGPN	*The Lexicon of Greek Personal Names* (Oxford, 1987–)
LIMC	*Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae* (Zürich, 1981–)
LO	Late Orientalizing

L–P	*Poetarum Lesbiorum fragmenta*, ed. E. Lobel and D. L. Page (Oxford, 1955)
LPC	Late Protocorinthian
LPG	Late Protogeometric
LSAG^{2}	L. H. Jeffery, *The Local Scripts of Archaic Greece* (Oxford, 1961), 2nd edn, with a Supplement by A. W. Johnston (Oxford, 1990)
LSJ^{9}	H. G. Liddell and R. Scott, rev. H. S. Jones and R. McKenzie, *A Greek–English Lexicon. A New Edition, with a Supplement*, 9th edn (Oxford, 1968)
MAARAV	*MAARAV: A Journal for the Study of the Northwest Semitic Languages and Literatures*
Merkelbach–West	*Hesiodi Theogonia, Opera et Dies, Scutum edidit F. Solmsen. Fragmenta selecta ediderunt R. Merkelbach & M. L. West*, 3rd edn (Oxford, 1990)
Methone Pierias I	*Μεθώνη Πιερίας* I: *Επιγραφές, χαράγματα και εμπορικά σύμβολα στη γεωμετρική και αρχαϊκή κεραμική από το 'Υπόγειο' της Μεθώνης Πιερίας στη Μακεδονία*, ed. Y. Tzifopoulos (Thessaloniki, 2012)
MG	Middle Geometric
M–L	*A Selection of Greek Historical Inscriptions: To the End of the Fifth Century* BC, revised edn, ed. R. Meiggs and D. Lewis (Oxford, 1988)
MPC	Middle Protocorinthian
Nauck^{2}	*Tragicorum Graecorum fragmenta* ed. A. Nauck, 2nd edn (Leipzig, 1889)
Odyssey I–III	*A Commentary on Homer's Odyssey*, vol. i (*Introduction and Books I–VIII*), A. Heubeck, S. West, and J. B. Hainsworth; vol. ii (*Books IX–XVI*), A. Heubeck and A. Hoekstra; vol. iii (*Books XVII–XXIV*), J. Russo, M. Fernández-Galliano, and A. Heubeck (Oxford, 1989–1992)
Olson–Sens	*Matro of Pitane and the Tradition of Epic Parody in the Fourth Century BCE: Text, Translation, and Commentary*, ed. S. Douglas Olson, and A. Sens (Atlanta, GA, 1999)
P.	pyre (usually followed by a number)
Page [*vel PMG*]	*Poetae melici Graeci*, ed. D. L. Page (Oxford, 1962)

Page–Davies [*vel PMGF*]	*Poetarum Melicorum Graecorum Fragmenta*, vol. i (*Alcman, Stesichorus, Ibycus*) *post D. L. Page edidit Malcolm Davies* (Oxford, 1991)
Paralipomena	J. D. Beazley, *Paralipomena: Additions to Attic Black-Figure Vase-Painters and to Attic Red-Figure Vase-Painters*, 2nd edn (Oxford, 1971)
PAT	*Palmyrene Aramaic Texts*, ed. D. R. Hillers and E. Cussini (Baltimore–London, 1996)
PC	Protocorinthian
Pfeiffer	*Callimachus*, vols. i–ii, ed. R. Pfeiffer (Oxford, 1949–1953)
PG	Protogeometric
Pindar, Snell–Maehler	*Pindarus*, pars I, 7th edn: *Epinicia. Post B. Snell edidit H. Maehler* (Leipzig, 1984); pars II: *Fragmenta, Indices. Edidit H. Maehler* (Leipzig, 1989)
Pithekoussai I	*Pithekoussai I* [*I.1 (Testo), I.2 (Tavole)*], *La necropoli: Tombe 1–723 scavate dal 1952 al 1961* (*Monumenti Antichi*, serie generale 55 [serie monografica 4]), ed. G. Buchner and D. Ridgeway (Rome, 1993)
PMG	= Page
PMGF	= Page–Davies
Prakt.	*Πρακτικὰ τῆς* [*ἐν Ἀθήναις*] *Ἀρχαιολογικῆς Ἑταιρείας*
psc	pendent semicircle
RE	*[Paulys] Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, Neue Bearbeitung von G. Wissowa . . . hrsg. von K. Ziegler (Stuttgart, 1894–1980)
Rose	*Aristoteles: Qui ferebantur librorum fragmenta. Collegit Valentinus Rose* (Stuttgart, 1886)
RS	Ras Shamra (Ugarit)
Salamis V	V. Karageorghis, *Salamis*, vol. v: *Excavations in the Necropolis of Salamis*, fasc. 3 *(Text)* (Nicosia, 1973); fasc. *Plates* (Nicosia, 1974)
Samos V	H. Walter, *Samos*, vol. v: *Frühe samische Gefässe. Chronologie und Landschaftsstile ostgriechischer Gefässe* (Bonn, 1968)
Sandbach	*Menandri reliquiae selectae*, 2nd edn, ed. F. H. Sandbach (Oxford, 1990)

SEG	*Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum*, vols. 1–11, ed. J. E. Hondius (Leiden, 1923–1954); vols. 12–25, ed. A. G. Woodhead (Leiden, 1955–1971); vols. 26–41, ed. H. W. Pleket, and R. S. Stroud (Amsterdam, 1979–1994); vols. 42–44, ed. H. W. Pleket, R. S. Stroud and J. H. M. Strubbe (Amsterdam, 1995–1997); vols. 45–49, ed. H. W. Pleket, R. S. Stroud, A. Chaniotis, and J. H. M. Strubbe (Amsterdam, 1998–2002); vol. 50, ed. A. Chaniotis, R. S. Stroud, and J. H. M. Strubbe (Amsterdam, 2003); vols. 51–, ed. A. Chaniotis, T. Corsten, R. S. Stroud, and R. A. Tynbout (Amsterdam, 2005–)
sch	scholia
SG	Subgeometric
SLG	*Supplementum Lyricis Graecis: Poetarum lyricorum fragmenta quae recens innotuerunt edidit Denys Page* (Oxford, 1974)
SM	Submycenean
SPG	Sub-Protogeometric
SVA	= von Arnim
T.	tomb[3]
Theiler	*Poseidonios: Die Fragmente*, ed. Willy Theiler, vol. i (*Texte*), vol. ii (*Erläuterungen*) (Berlin–New York, 1982)
ThesCRA	*Thesaurus Cultus et Rituum Antiquorum* (Basle–Los Angeles, 2004–)
TM	Tell Mardikh (Ebla)
TO II	*Textes Ougaritiques*, ii: *Textes religieux et rituels* (introduction, traduction, commentaire par A. Caquot et J.-M. de Tarragon), *Correspondance* (par J.-L. Cunchillos) (Paris, 1989)
TrGF	*Tragicorum Graecorum fragmenta*, vol. i, ed. B. Snell; vol. ii, ed. R. Kannicht and B. Snell; vols. iii–iv, ed. S. Radt; vol. v, ed. R. Kannicht (Göttingen, 1977–2004)
Voigt	*Sappho et Alcaeus: Fragmenta*, ed. Eva-Maria Voigt (Amsterdam, 1971)

[3] Cf. previous note.

von Arnim	*Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta, collegit Ioannes von Arnim*, vols. i-iii, ed. H. F. A. von Arnim (Stuttgart, 1903–1924)
Wehrli	F. Wehrli, *Die Schule des Aristoteles: Texte und Kommentare*, 2nd edn, fascs. 1–10 (Basle, 1967–1969)
West	*Carmina Anacreontea*, ed. M. L. West (Leipzig, 1984)
W^2 [*vel IEG*^{2}]	*Iambi et elegi Graeci ante Alexandrum cantati*, 2nd edn, vols. i–ii, ed. M. L. West (Oxford, 1992)
Wimmer	*Theophrasti Eresii Opera, quae supersunt, omnia Graeca recensuit, Latine interpretatus est, indices rerum et verborum absolutissimos adjecit Fredericus Wimmer* . . . (Paris, 1866)
Zagora II	*Zagora 2: Excavation of a Geometric Town on the Island of Andros. Excavation Season 1969. Study Season 1969–1970* (fasc. 1: *Text*; fasc. 2: *Plates*), ed. A. Cambitoglou, A. Birchall, J. J. Coulton, and J. R. Green (Athens, 1988)

Introduction

0.1 AN OUTLINE OF SYMPOTIC STUDIES

Unlike the Roman feast (*convivium* or *cena*), already explored by Renaissance scholars,[1] the symposion was long neglected in European thought. Since the eighteenth century, it has been studied as one aspect of the daily life of the Ancients, as one of the 'antiquities' (*antiquitates*) or customs of old, or else as a chapter in the 'history of mores' (*histoire des moeurs*). This is by no means surprising, since even modern historians and anthropologists have long been interested in the feasting customs of the past, above all else, for their ceremonial aspects. Commensal rituals were not studied in their own right, but as ceremonial forms illustrating other, presumably more important, social, political, or cultural phenomena.

However, the efforts of three independent scholarly traditions led to a series of genuine breakthroughs in 'sympotic studies' during the early 1980s. German and Italian philologists made a close study of the symposion as an occasion for exploring the performance of various forms of Greek monodic poetry in the archaic period. As it turned out, the majority of such poems were composed with a view to being performed at symposia.[2]

Oswyn Murray discovered another face of the symposion. His approach might helpfully be ascribed to the broader discipline of 'new cultural history'.[3] Anthropologists had been beating a path to this development since at least the 1960s, with diverse schools of anthropology and social psychology emphasizing the links between

[1] Cf., briefly, Slater (1991*b*) 1. See e.g. Petrus Ciacconius Toletanus (Pedro Chacón, 1527–1581), *De triclinio Romano*, Romae 1588 (soon re-edited as *De triclinio, sive de modo convivandi apud priscos Romanos & de conviviorum apparatu*, Romae 1590); its Amsterdam editions of 1664 (Amstelodami: Sumptibus Sebastiani Combi & Joannis Lanou) and 1689 were supplemented by a treatise by Hieronymus Mercurialis (Girolamo Mercuriale, 1530–1606), *De accubitus in cena antiquorum origine dissertatio*.

[2] See esp. Rösler (1980) (developing Trumpf 1973); Vetta (1983*b*) (cf. also Vetta 1992 and 1996); Rossi (1983). Almost a century earlier, see Reitzenstein (1893), well ahead of his time.

culturally determined culinary or drinking customs and the cultural patterns, values, and intellectual paradigms of a given society.[4] This new field opened the door to recognition by scholars of how 'Drinking reveals sensitive mechanisms for redefinition of social roles'.[5] In these theories, feasting habits represented active sites for fashioning social life and communal mentalities—not simply reflections or extensions of social practice. All of which is to say that adherents to this line of thinking assigned primary importance to social and cultural factors in the study of the ways that alcohol affects individuals and social groups, independent of its biochemical or psychological effects.

Intimate drinking events are often accompanied by peculiar, specialized, or stylized language in various cultures. It is therefore unsurprising that communication amongst fellow-drinkers featured prominently in each of the three aforementioned traditions. This is particularly true with respect to the third tradition in question, represented by some scholars of the so-called 'School of Paris', working under the influence of Jean-Pierre Vernant and Pierre Vidal-Naquet. Several of their disciples have intensely studied the iconography of archaic and classical Greek vase painting. What they were looking for was ultimately a specific 'language' of images that could be put together with the social ideals and realities of the Greek cities of those periods. And since a large part of these finely painted vases were sympotic pottery (often displaying, or evoking, sympotic scenes) the ideals and realities of the symposion played a key role in their respective work.[6] Incidentally, an anthropological perspective might justify identifying the iconography of Greek vases as simply another example of the stylized 'language' of drinking groups.

The shadow of all three traditions can be immediately discerned from the dialogue of disciplines, methodologies, and intellectual

[3] See in particular: Murray (1983*a*); (1983*b*); (1983*c*); (1988); (1990*b*); (1991); (1992); (1993), esp. 207–213; (1994); (1995); (1995) [1993]; (2003); (2009), as well as Murray (forthcoming). Cf. below, pp. 3–4 with n. 8. For the 'new cultural history' in general, see the classical collection of essays edited by Hunt (1989). For applying this approach to the early Greek material, see Morris (2000) esp. 3–33.

[4] Lévi-Strauss (1968) was of course very important here. A path-breaking collective book was published in 1988, tellingly entitled *Constructive Drinking: Perspectives on Drink from Anthropology* (Douglas 1988*a*; and see esp. 'Introduction': Douglas 1988*b*). For a balance sheet of the pioneering decade of 'alcohol studies' (1970–1980), see D. B. Heath (1988) (now cf. D. B. Heath 2000). For the important theory of 'commensal politics' by M. Dietler and B. Hayden, see below, Section 0.4.

[5] I quote here Lill (2007) 175.

backgrounds that have all allowed modern 'sympotic studies' to flourish, as evidenced by large international conferences on the subject.[7] Indeed, these distinctive inspirations and efforts have made this branch of scholarship remarkably prolific and irreversibly interdisciplinary. However, this widespread attention has often managed to obscure the originality of the Greek symposion, as specialists in different civilizations (ancient and otherwise) have often taken the opportunity of these congresses and their resultant publications to draw analogies between Greek banquets and the commensal customs of other societies. While this kind of scholarly work has been able to demonstrate interesting parallels and mutual historical links (influences, borrowings, etc.) between the Greeks and other peoples of the ancient world, it has given rise to the widely accepted idea—to which I will return time and again in this book—that Near-Eastern impulses were decisive in the rise and the development of the symposion. Accordingly, scholars have shown insufficient sensitivity to the intrinsic indigenous processes that fashioned the symposion in the Aegean.

* * *

Among contemporary scholars, the accepted account of the symposion is largely the product of Oswyn Murray's seminal studies.[8] By symposion, he means 'the group of men which expresses its identity through the ritual drinking session' (Murray 1983*b*, 196).

The symposion would therefore be a luxurious aristocratic banquet permeated by the 'principle of pleasure', incarnated in the Levantine custom of reclining at a feast, which was adopted by the Greek

[6] The point of reference for this current of scholarship was the collective book *La Cité des images* (1984), with a preface by J.-P. Vernant. See esp. Lissarrague (1987) (cf. Lissarrague 1985, 1990*a* and 1990*b*, 1995). Cf. also Schmitt & Schnapp (1982); Frontisi-Ducroux and Lissarrague (1983); Schnapp (1984); Laurens (1985). I will adduce several studies by Pauline Schmitt Pantel below, n. 8. Recently, see Catoni (2010). Cf. also Isler-Kerényi (2007). The pioneering work on the iconography of the symposion was by Paul Jacobsthal (Jacobsthal 1912, in particular his essay *Symposiaka*, on pp. 31–68).

[7] A series of conference papers were published in the late eighties and early nineties of the twentieth century. See, in particular, Murray (1990*a*), stemming from a seminal conference in Oxford in 1984. Cf. also Slater (1991*a*) and Murray & Tecuşan (1995); as well as Orfanos & Carrière (2003), summarizing two decades of the development of 'sympotic studies'. For important 'national' conferences, see e.g. Thelamon (1987); Garrier (1990); Aurell, Dumoulin, and Thelamon (1992) and Longo & Scarpi (1989); Scarpi (1991). Cf. also the collective volume, Fabian, Pellizer, and Tedeschi (1991).

[8] See above, n. 3. For important criticisms of his theory, see esp. Lombardo (1989); Schmitt Pantel (2011) 45–52. Cf. Schmitt Pantel (1990*a*); (1990*b*) (and already 1987);

aristocracy in the early archaic period. By enjoying a secluded and escapist venue for drinking, the former warrior-élite, which once excelled in the 'feasts of merit' still visible in Homer, gradually became an élite of leisure, emphasizing its social status and its dominant position in the *polis* by means of ostentatious display. In the overall historical interpretation of Murray, what is crucial are the historical links he postulates for the symposion with the 'heroic banquet' of the Dark Ages and Near-Eastern convivial practices called *marzēaḥ*.[9] Above all, it is the adoption of the self-indulgent habit of reclining on a convivial couch that suggests to Murray both the hypothetical Levantine provenance of the luxurious aristocratic banquet and its historical frame of emergence in Greece. Following his lead, the symposion and the 'reclining banquet' have become synonymous for the majority of scholars in the field.

While making generous use of Murray's theory of the symposion, my own study will try to put forward an alternative set of 'indicators' or 'tracer elements', by which to identify the minimally distinctive features of this institution. Accordingly, my reconstruction of the origins of the symposion, or rather of the historical process leading to its rise, will be markedly different from Murray's—'not by virtue of any sharpness of sight on our part', as John of Salisbury once put it—but precisely owing to his groundbreaking work.

0.2 SYMPOSION IN PERSPECTIVE: SOME METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Studying the origins of an intricate historical phenomenon, we are inevitably drawn into the adoption of a long-term approach. Within the context of ancient history, this sometimes involves delving into the preliterate past of a given society. Perhaps even worse, it always results in a 'source base' that is sown from an accidental combination of incompatible items. What makes such patchwork particularly difficult to tie together is that we often find ourselves in possession

(1992); (1995); as well as Schmitt Pantel (1985) 145–158. More recently, cf. Yatromanolakis (2009) 417 and 422–424, and Rabinowitz (2004) 2–5 and 122–126.

[9] Cf. also Matthäus (1999) and (1999/2000); Carter (1997). Most recently, cf. Schuitema (2008). More on this issue below, Section 3.2.

of isolated or extremely distant pieces of the historical cloth. Moreover, what such pieces reveal is often dependent on the differing social and literary conventions characteristic of a given piece. Archaeology comes first in this study, followed by early epigraphic documents, the Homeric epics, and then various types of archaic lyric poetry in conjunction with the concurrent iconography of archaic vase painting. Different types of classical literature then come to the fore, including prose works explicitly set in a sympotic context, especially the *Banquets* of Plato and Xenophon. Finally, several antiquarian works written centuries after the symposion had died out all come to our rescue, including Plutarch's *Table Talk,* Athenaeus's *Learned Banqueters*, and the valuable linguistic thesaurus by Pollux.

And yet, the question must be seriously asked whether it is possible to combine disparate and incompatible data stretching over a millennium in a way that yields meaningful historical results.

Bringing together material that appears to resist comparison and combination, at the very least requires a general intellectual framework within which to work. However, such theoretical assumptions are often left unstated or adopted without sufficient consideration—simply adopting the currently dominant intellectual paradigms.

Tackling the early history of the Greek banquet, there are essentially two possibilities at our disposal. The first rests with the introduction of a variety of anthropological and sociological explanatory models, used to clarify changing and incomplete archaeological evidence, alongside comparative material to make sense of periods that lack or have insufficient literary sources. In the second case, we may press toward a reconstruction built on more complete evidence from a later historical period from within the same civilization, without reaching for external data or models (sociological, ethnographic, etc.). At present, the former attitude seems to be widespread in archaeological circles,[10] while the latter posture, once natural for ancient historians, has seemingly fallen out of favour.

Both approaches serve a diachronic historical study, but the latter is openly retrospective. It defines a given historical phenomenon by identifying its essential characteristics based on material from a relatively well-documented historical period and on this basis it develops an interpretive model for the given phenomenon within

[10] For important consequences of embracing this approach in current scholarship when studying the early Greek *polis*, see my remarks in Wecowski (2009).

an extended or long-term framework (in other words, a Weberian 'ideal type'). Advances in comprehension are then obtained by projecting the model backwards in time. On this measure, the findings obtained are considered valid if otherwise inconclusive archaeological material is thereby given shape or rendered meaningful, perhaps directing the way toward an explanation of the origins of the phenomenon under scrutiny.

Within an extended frame of reference, comparative thinking, the other approach, risks producing a very specific distorting effect. By dealing with the historical process in a prospective manner, it naturally turns toward more or less evolutionary models to describe continuous change from simpler to more complex forms, eventually culminating in the better-documented state of affairs.

In the specific terms of this study, earlier scholarship on the Greek symposion relied heavily on comparative thinking and evolutionary models. Most recently, Adam Rabinowitz (Rabinowitz 2004) ingeniously used Michael Dietler's theory of 'commensal politics' (an idea to which I will return throughout this book) as an intellectual tool for studying early Greek commensality and its sociocultural implications. While fully aware of the risk of evolutionary thinking,[11] Rabinowitz nevertheless tries to make sense of the archaeological record by correlating the anthropological categories or 'modalities of feasting' elaborated by M. Dietler and B. Hayden with consecutive stages of the development of social stratification in Dark Age and early archaic Greek communities. Under this conceptual paradigm, the symposion naturally loses its prominent position in a historical picture dominated by general trends—conceived on the basis of the aforementioned external models. I would argue that such prospective-oriented models of analysis tend to underrate discontinuities and downplay 'highlights', the French *temps forts*, within the historical process. With reference to the material at hand, it results in an underestimation of the symposion's originality and uniqueness, likewise obscuring the particular circumstances of its rise.

By contrast, retrospective reasoning can be more sensitive to discontinuities and peculiarities. But it has a fundamental shortcoming: it produces a less dynamic picture, as it consists in looking for preestablished essential characteristics of a given historical phenomenon in periods prior to its well-documented existence. As such, it often

[11] Cf. also caveats by Dietler (2001) 93.

runs the risk of anachronistic thinking. However, it must be said that the 'prospective' approach can be equally anachronistic. But because this approach belongs to the standard repertoire of the social and historical science paradigms that dominate our horizon (although it ultimately stems from the natural science of positivism), we tend to overlook this fault.

Simply put, none of the aforementioned approaches are untouched by defect. It would therefore be ideal to combine both methods in a long-term historical study that begins precisely in periods lacking literary sources. What is essential is to order the steps in our inquiry correctly. In this book, I will begin by adopting the retrospective method, namely by constructing a definition of the symposion based on the well-documented archaic and classical material and compiling a list of the essential characteristics to be projected backwards in time, which will then be applied to our patchy data from earlier periods. Only at a later stage of my study, for the purposes of verifying my results and providing a general historical picture that centres on the rise of the symposion in the later phase of the Geometric period, will I introduce comparative reasoning in conjunction with the aforementioned sociological and anthropological models.

0.3 ENTERING THE SYMPOSION: THE HISTORICAL UNITY OF THE GREEK ARISTOCRATIC BANQUET

Since the 1980s, the symposion has been one of the most intensively explored fields of classical studies. Nevertheless, as Pauline Schmitt Pantel indicated over a quarter of a century ago, the meaning of 'what one calls symposion is far from clear' (Schmitt Pantel 1985, 142). In scholarly literature, we hear of Mycenaean, Etruscan, and even Egyptian symposia.[12] This fact does not reflect simply imprecision, but is indicative of a major scholarly problem that originates in the absence of a satisfactory definition of the symposion.

As I have already suggested, it appears desirable to confine the use of the term 'symposion' to the drinking habits documented in Greek communities of the archaic and classical periods, without excessively

[12] It is enough to mention here some of the papers in Murray & Tecuşan (1995). Cf. also Danek (1994/1995) 37 (with n. 23) on different forms of Greek symposia.

diluting our wine by applying this term to all conceivable forms of ancient merrymaking. And for all its remarkable mutations over time, I would argue that there was a convivial institution consistent enough in its basic forms of entertainment and in its socio-political functions, throughout its long history, to be justifiably labelled 'symposion' by modern historians. In other words, this is a study of the symposion as such, not about different modalities of Greek banquets.

I would provisionally define the symposion as a culture-oriented drinking occasion held by Greek élites, as opposed to 'casual and commercial wine consumption' in ancient Greece and communal drinking by non-élites.[13] However, the notion of 'élite drinking' is not specific enough because any study of the symposion requires a more attentive definition of the social circle entitled to enjoy and participate in this type of banquet. Curiously enough, the identity of the Greek aristocracy was usually taken for granted in earlier scholarship, and has still not attracted a great deal of scholarly attention. Notwithstanding this, it is essential to reconsider the historical specificity of the social group the Greeks called *aristoi* or *agathoi* ('the best', 'the good ones')—as compared with other social élites in antiquity and beyond. This work belongs to my first chapter. Only after having established the main characteristics of the 'sympotic group' can we then assume the difficult task of adequately defining the symposion itself.

* * *

But first, we ought to ask a simpler question: Are we entitled to take for granted the historical persistence of a social practice that we might call the 'symposion'?

More specifically, the retrospective method I have advocated above makes it possible to project the notion of the symposion backwards in time based on later sources. But this avoids the question of whether such a picture is reliable, that is, whether the existence of a social practice coherent both in synchronic and diachronic terms, in time and in space, around the Greek world and throughout the archaic and early classical periods, namely the late eighth to the late fifth centuries BC, may be assumed. This is a crucial point. As many critics have previously observed, the all-embracing notion of the symposion that is dominant in current scholarship, building on the work of Oswyn

[13] I quote here the title of a good recent synthesis of *kapēleion*, or the Greek tavern, by Kelly Blazeby (2006); and cf. Kelly Blazeby (2011) esp. 98.

Murray, is too general and vague since it covers diverse Greek commensal practices.[14] Of course, the analysis that follows aims to establish a series of 'indicators' to distinguish the symposion from other types of Greek male banqueting.[15] But it would be rather useful to know at the outset that this is not a quest for a chimera. After all, the Greeks themselves were fully aware of the local idiosyncrasies of their drinking customs.[16] Put differently, there never was 'a single, archetypal mode of commensality, but rather a variety of practices operating in different contexts' (Hodkinson 1997, 91), an entire spectrum of practices anchored in local traditions and at least partly based on the imitation of foreign customs and those of other social groups.

Provided that we believe the symposion actually existed, another concomitant question arises: Was it an exclusively aristocratic activity, in which other social groups could not participate or organize themselves? Based on the diverse peculiarities of archaic and early classical vase-painting iconography, some scholars claim that non-aristocrats likewise enjoyed their symposia.[17] In tentatively answering these disquieting questions, I would suggest that answers rest with archaic monodic poetry.

What is noteworthy about Greek monody is its spread across space and time. Running from Colophon in Asia Minor to Sicily and the Magna Graecia, and from Archilochus of Paros in the first half of the seventh century to Kritias of Athens in the second half of the fifth century, we observe a remarkably coherent set of artistic tastes and similar social ideals across a vast geographical and chronological field of poetry. At present, it is widely accepted that the majority of this poetry was intended for performance in a convivial setting. And by extension, despite geographic and diachronic differences, symposia

[14] See esp. critical remarks by Lombardo (1989) 313 and *passim*. Regarding *phratria*, *syssition*, *hetaireia*, *andreion*, *phidition*, *syskēnion*, *synōmosia*, *enōmotia*, and *eranos*, Murray writes that 'All these words and many others refer to the same phenomenon, for which I use (as the most neutral term possible) the classical Greek designation symposion . . . and which is capable of many transformations in the developed Archaic city-state' (Murray 1983*b*, 196). In other words, they form a coherent social practice to be identified with the symposion.

[15] See esp. Chapter 2 below. In Chapter 3 I discuss the 'indicators' of the symposion as elaborated by O. Murray.

[16] See e.g. Kritias, *BNJ* 338A fr. 10 (= DK 88 B 33 = *FGrHist* 338A F 10). For my analysis of this important testimony, see below, pp. 98–99 and pp. 306–308.

[17] See, in particular, Yatromanolakis (2009); and cf. Corner (2010). Cf. also a nuanced approach to 'communal drinking' in Lynch (2007) 246–247.

hosting poetic performances must have been very similar throughout the Greek world, at least in their musical and artistic aspects. To put it simply, pieces of archaic Greek monody travelled easily and were fully interchangeable, so to say, in performative terms. It is clear from the *Theognidea* (partly stemming from a fifth-century collection; see Bowie 2012) that an appropriate banquet piece might be drawn from Theognis, Simonides, Solon, Mimnermos, or Tyrtaeus, i.e. poets originally working at a great distance from one another in both space and in time. Theognis, to take one example, expected his poems to gain Panhellenic recognition, envisaging them being performed in similar circumstances across the Greek world.[18]

Additionally, we should not overlook the fact that an important aspect of these poems, from Archilochus to Kritias, was the 'meta-convivial discourse'. The poets spoke about the banquet at convivial occasions. The poets in question often allude to, or play with, the same convivial *Realien* (that is, the setting and paraphernalia of the symposion). But even more important is the fact that they consistently discuss and 'problematize' their banquets. In all this, I think it is reasonable to speak of the symposion as the underlying institutional reality of these artistic and intellectual phenomena. And in the first chapter, I will attempt to show that the remarkable coherence and durability of the lifestyle on which the symposion was based suited the Greek aristocracy, both in terms of a relatively persistent set of social ideals and in terms of important socio-political needs.

This brings us back to the aforementioned problem of whether or not the symposion was exclusively aristocratic and the question concerning the existence of non-élite symposia. No doubt, non-aristocratic groups of citizens did organize drinking parties in Greek cities and elsewhere. But the question is whether they ought to be called 'symposia'. I think they should not, as granting them this title would require ignoring the cultural and literary aspects of the symposia—its defining features. Indeed, the very heart of the symposion was occupied with active participation in various poetic and intellectual competitions, including impromptu performances by the amateur feasters. At the very least, such activities required basic musical training and a degree of poetic erudition. For these reasons, without of course overestimating the actual competencies of the

[18] See *Theogn*. 22–23; cf. 239–243 and 247–250. Theognis' hopes that this situation will last forever should not detain us here.

majority of those frequenting symposia, I am convinced that Greek symposiasts must have belonged to a social group that could afford to spend time, perhaps even a great deal of it, learning, practising, and then deploying various cultural competencies.[19] However we define the 'sympotic group', it must therefore be characterized as a 'leisure class' of the archaic and early classical period. Mechanisms for social advancement by non-aristocrats, who become successful enough to join in this group, represent another issue, because acceptance by the group permanently removed them from the ranks of non-élite citizens.[20] These mechanisms are treated at greater length in Chapter 1.

From this point of view, it is also possible to establish the approximate historical end of the symposion, thus limiting the scope of our 'source base' for defining the institution.[21] If we agree on preliminarily defining the symposion as a culture-oriented drinking occasion for Greek élites, we ought to note the decomposition of this institution in the course of the later part of the fifth and first half of the fourth century BC. With the rise of the sophists, the monopoly of former cultural élites on higher forms of literary culture broke down, while the advent of so-called 'new music' crowned the growing and ultimately permanent prominence of professional performers at élite

[19] This peculiarity of the symposion properly speaking was a self-evident issue still in the second half of the fifth century. Hence the comical effect of the famous scene of the 'sympotic education' of two commoners in Aristophanes' *Wasps* (*Vesp.* 1208–1264; see more below, p. 90 with n. 18, with comments to be found there and pp. 97–98) staged in 422 BC.

[20] Lynch (2007) 247–249 (see already in *AJA* 105, 2001, pp. 268–269), noting the dramatic increase in the number of drinking cups in the Athenian Agora just before *c.*500 BC, interestingly suggests that 'The ritual and material culture of the more formal "symposium"-style drinking may have been a way for the men of the new Athenian democracy to emulate the activities of elite Archaic politicians' (Lynch 2007, 249). Thereby, I would add, they would claim for themselves the status of new Athenian élites and try to distinguish themselves in cultural terms from the lower strata of citizenry using the sympotic habits they had just appropriated for themselves.

[21] I will only have recourse to later sources, including Plutarch and Athenaeus, to complete the picture stemming from earlier authorities. Writers of the Roman period will be very important, though, since we may assume that they extensively drew on their rich sources—no longer extant—pertaining to the archaic and classical symposion. Whenever late writers, both Hellenistic and Roman, can enrich our general picture by details absent from the earlier testimonies, I think it admissible to include them in our study, provided, however, that we use them only for unknown secondary details and not as our only source of information for a given phenomenon otherwise unattested.

symposia—at the expense of amateur performances by the banqueters themselves. It is true that literary forms stemming from archaic sympotic poetry survive in erudite poets of the Hellenistic period. And as late as the fourth and even third centuries, we can still find a number of testimonies to the survival of some literary forms, rituals, and ideals of the classical symposion in real-life banquets.[22] Nevertheless, the Greek aristocratic banquet was already dead. In the generation of Aristotle's disciples, Aristoxenus and Dicaearchus symptomatically wrote erudite works on musical performances and on cultural contests, touching upon many sympotic practices, including their famous speculations on the nature of the convivial song called *skolion*.[23] In which case, we may say that one of the most important sympotic pastimes already belonged among the antiquities of the Greek culture by the second half of the fourth century BC. The symposion itself, as it were, has been left in this museum of antiquarian curiosities until the early eighties of this past century.

0.4 APPENDIX I: TYPOLOGIES OF THE FEAST: TWO THEORETICAL MODELS

In the past few decades, the anthropological 'theory of commensal politics', as its founder Michael Dietler calls it, has become popular amongst students of early Greece.[24]

Describing 'modes of commensal politics', his theory is 'a heuristic dissection of the politico-symbolic dimension of feasting as an institution' (Dietler 2001, 75). Dietler singles out three such 'modes': the 'empowering feast'; the 'patron-role feast'; and the 'diacritical feast'; all

[22] See e.g. a well-known fourth-century Greek document from Elephantine in Egypt containing, among other things, a remarkable sympotic elegy, the Berlin papyrus 13270 (*adespota elegiaca* 27 W^2), on which see below, p. 73. For the archaeological indications of profound changes in Athenian drinking customs in the Hellenistic period, see Rotroff (1996) (although the general historical explanation of these changes suggested by this scholar is not entirely persuasive). Cf. also Kwapisz (forthcoming). I deal with the process of abandoning the symposion proper in a separate study in preparation.

[23] On *skolion*, see below, pp. 94–96.

[24] See: Dietler (1990); (1996); (1999); (2001). Cf. Dietler (1997), Dietler and Hayden (2001*b*) and Hayden (2001).

characterized by particular bonds of mutual obligation between the guests and their host, or between the feasters themselves.[25]

The 'empowering feast' involves members of egalitarian élites, in a community in which social hierarchy is not clearly defined by inheritance. In the first place, the 'empowering feast' 'involves the manipulation of commensal hospitality toward the acquisition and maintenance of certain forms of symbolic capital, and sometimes economic capital', with 'Symbolic capital translate[d] into an ability to influence group decisions or actions' (Dietler 2001, 75 and 76, respectively). In the case of the 'patron-role feast', 'Institutionalization of authority relies on . . . binding asymmetrical commensal links between unequal partners in a patron/client relationship' (Dietler 2001, 83). In other words, it 'involves the formalized use of commensal hospitality to symbolically reiterate and legitimize institutionalized relations of asymmetrical social power' (Dietler 2001, 82). And all of this requires something like a monopoly of access to specific economic resources necessary to duly host guests (large quantities of food, particularly exotic food or spices, etc.).

The 'diacritical feast' 'involves the use of differentiated cuisine and styles of consumption as a diacritical symbolic device . . . ' (Dietler 2001, 85). '[T]he emphasis shifts from an asymmetrical commensal bond between unequal partners to a statement of exclusive and unequal commensal circles . . . ' (ibid.). 'Diacritical stylistic distinctions may be based upon the use of rare, expensive, or exotic foods or food ingredients. Or they may be orchestrated by the use of elaborate food-service vessels and implements or architectonically distinguished settings to serve to "frame" elite consumption as a distinctive practice even when food is not distinctive. Or they may be based upon differences in the complexity of the pattern of preparation and consumption of food and specialized knowledge and taste (i.e. the "cultural capital" . . .) that proper consumption entails' (Dietler 2001, 86).

What is at stake in the first two 'major modes of commensal politics' is the host's ability to create or maintain a special social position through the establishment of special bonds of obligation and superiority in relation to his guests. By contrast, the third case

[25] It is worthwhile to observe that the category of the 'feast of merit' as applied by O. Murray to the Homeric banquets (see esp. Murray 1983*b*, 197) combines essential characteristics of Dietler's 'empowering' and 'diacritical feasting'.

is entirely about securing pre-existing inequalities by excluding 'others' and underlining the difference between the fellow-feasters and all 'outsiders'. In the first two cases, the feast's sumptuousness is measured in quantitative terms (the amount of food and drink provided to the guests). In the 'diacritical feast' what counts is qualitative, as 'the basis of symbolic force shifts from quantity to matters of style and taste' (Dietler 2001, 85).

* * *

Another convenient typology of commensality was recently put forward by the French sociologist Claude Grignon.[26] Although Grignon's theory is based on his study of contemporary French society, some elements of his 'reasoned inventory of commensality types' (Grignon 2001, 25) may prove useful when studying the symposion.

The main dichotomic divide runs between 'domestic' and 'extra-domestic commensality'. In the latter category, one may further divide it into 'institutional' and 'non-institutional' commensality. Within this last class, Grignon also distinguishes semi-institutional 'commensality at work' from 'leisure commensality'. The latter is characterized by 'The strong and deep feeling of hierarchy and precedence . . . expressed in a minute etiquette, the strategic and honorific characteristics of exchange in a conspicuous outbidding' (Grignon 2001, 27). This type of commensality is 'directly linked to social segregation or even social repulsion' and operates by keeping or spreading 'a strategic net of acquaintances' (Grignon 2001, 26). For individuals, the obvious goal is 'to keep up one's position' 'by sharing in a system of mutual invitations which approves and attests to membership' (ibid.).

From another perspective, we might draw out the dichotomy between 'everyday commensality' and 'exceptional commensality', with the latter corresponding 'to the high or stressed times of the annual calendar or the life cycle' (Grignon 2001, 27). Much more important is the functional dichotomy of 'segregative commensality' as juxtaposed to 'transgressive commensality'.[27] For 'Commensality can approve and express discontinuities that separate human groups as well as negotiate those discontinuities by temporarily and symbolically bringing together separated groups, even by confirming and reinforcing their opposition in the end' (Grignon 2001, 28).

[26] Grignon (2001). [27] Grignon (2001) 28–31.

'Segregative commensality' (corresponding to the 'diacritical feasting' of Dietler's theory) is when people 'meet for eating and drinking in a way to set up or to restore the group by closing it, a way to assert or strengthen a "We" by pointing out and rejecting, as symbols of otherness, the "not We", strangers, rivals, enemies, superiors and inferiors' (Grignon 2001, 28–29). This series of exclusions makes it possible for the group 'to number its members, to register recruitments and defections, comers and goers' (Grignon 2001, 28). It 'is also, in the case of exceptional commensality, a means of scrutinizing itself, of pointing out its divisions, its hierarchies, on occasion its antagonisms, of activating and reactivating its functioning, its internal life, i.e. the relationships of solidarity, competition, and even conflict between its members' (ibid.). In such a situation, 'Intake of approved food and drugs (alcohol and tobacco in Western cultures) enhances communicative exaltation, allowing a lowering of censure and reserve, a role played elsewhere by music or dance (often associated with exceptional commensality)' (ibid.).

'Transgressive commensality' plays with the borders between different groups, temporarily and symbolically transgressing and neutralizing such borders. 'And it is by transgressing them that it contributes to maintaining them' (Grignon 2001, 31)—just as other carnivalesque rituals do, we might add. Interestingly, 'transgressive commensality' may consist in inviting an 'outsider' to meet a group of 'insiders'. 'Inviting a stranger is a confrontation, a reciprocal challenge, which allows each to test the other, on the basis of shared criteria, with an excessive offer of drink and food, and so to measure the other's value, physically as well as psychologically and morally. It also provides an opportunity to agree with the other on the terms of possible conflict, and to overload the other with excessive honours, which, in the logic of conspicuous provocation and generous overbidding, are potential affronts as well' (Grignon 2001, 31).

I will examine the utility of both models for the study of the symposion later in this book (1.4.2), after having characterized the Greek banquet and its social aspects at length.

I

Defining the Symposion

1

Early Greek Aristocracy and the Symposion

1.1 THE NATURE OF ARCHAIC GREEK ARISTOCRACY

1.1.1 What is Early Greek Aristocracy?

In his recent work discussing patterns of social recognition in Greece between the tenth and the fifth century BC, Alain Duplouy rightly points out the lack of an historically pertinent and universally accepted definition of Greek aristocracy.[1] The deficiency referred to in this remarkable study is not surprising. In the first place, the nineteenth and early twentieth century visions of the archaic Greek city as a 'clan state' (*Geschlechterstaat*), a polity founded on kinship ties and dominated by the ruling élite consisting of aristocratic clans, ultimately collapsed several decades ago.[2] And with the disappearance of the previously unquestioned definition of the archaic aristocracy as a separate social order based on status transmitted through lineage, no fresh *communis opinio* has subsequently emerged. As is often the case when large scholarly constructs are discarded, the void left by the disappearance of the theory in question was filled by a lively debate on detailed and specialized topics concerning, for example, the economic role, values, and lifestyle of the 'Homeric' and archaic Greek élites.[3]

At the same time, earlier enthusiasm for identifying the origins or precise historical starting-point of the Greek *polis* faded away,

[1] Duplouy (2006) 11–12, referring to Bravo (1984) 140.

[2] See esp. the epoch-making works by Roussel (1976) and Bourriot (1976). For recent debates on early Greek aristocracy, see Duplouy (2006) 1–23. In general, cf. also Starr (1992).

[3] See esp. the works by O. Murray adduced above (p. 2 n. 3). Recently, cf., e.g., Donlan (1980); Stahl (1987) esp. 79–104; Stein-Hölkeskamp (1989) and (1992).

yielding to more nuanced historical models.[4] In the now outdated paradigm, the birth of the *polis* and the emergence of a clearly defined social élite, described as the aristocracy, were inseparable. As this is no longer the case, a number of important studies discussing the period spanning the ninth to seventh centuries BC often use the term 'aristocracy', *aristoi,* or *agathoi* interchangeably with terms such as 'the élite(s)', 'the nobility' or 'nobles', 'the upper class' and even 'the wealthy'. Scholars generally do not try to define these terms more precisely, and they consequently fail to recognize the historical specificity of the political and social élites in the Greek *poleis*—both as compared with earlier and later social phenomena in the Aegean, and in a wider Mediterranean context of the period.

This is apparently related to the hypothesis put forward by Oswyn Murray more than thirty years ago in his ground breaking book, *Early Greece* (Murray 1993 [1978]), in which he advocates a relatively smooth development from the warrior élite of the Dark Ages to the escapist 'leisure class', indulging in a luxurious life-style, in the archaic period. Other authors focused mainly on the economic aspects of this hypothetical evolution, writing about radical changes affecting the basic forms of economic activity of early Greek élites.[5] All these theories share the common presumption that the social and political élites of the Dark Ages and those of the early archaic period must have looked essentially identical—as if embracing consecutive generations of the same social group. In these theories, the latter are transformed quite easily into the former, without any qualitative change or mutation. But since its members happened to live in radically different historical circumstances, their forms of economic and political activity changed accordingly. This entire vision strikes me as unpersuasive.

Indeed, the disappearance of aristocracy as a well-defined category caused Duplouy to discard mentions of 'aristocracy', 'aristocrats', or 'aristocratic' from his book. He tried to replace what he called the 'essentialist definition' of aristocracy with a behavioural one (*une définition comportementale*).[6] As a result, his study is excellent in descriptive terms, but its methodological approach obfuscates any attempt to shed more light on the origins of the Greek aristocracy.

[4] Cf. briefly Wecowski (2009) (discussing Osborne 2009).
[5] See in general Tandy (1997).
[6] Duplouy (2006) 30. Cf. Ampolo, Bartoloni, and Rathje (1984).

1.1.2 The Equal and the More Equal in the Archaic City

Definitions of the untitled aristocracy provided by modern historiography are not particularly helpful when applied to the Greek social élite of the archaic period.[7] However, I would like to suggest that, making due allowances, a certain historical case could prove very instructive. The nobility of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, known as *szlachta*, may serve as a useful historical parallel and assist the formulation of a preliminary definition of the Greek aristocracy.[8] I have chosen this particular group because it constituted a rather large proportion of society (perhaps up to ten per cent) and because it lacked formalized internal stratification. The formalized aristocratic hierarchies in place in other cultures with a similarly large proportion of 'nobles', such as early modern age Castile or Hungary or the ancient princely clans (*tavadni*) in Georgia, make them unsuitable for comparison with the Greeks.

What particularly interests me about the Polish-Lithuanian nobility is the fact that the dividing line between rank and file nobles and the uppermost echelons of this class, described as the magnates, was not clear cut, remaining something of a puzzle even for modern historians.[9] The possession of one of the very few titles claimed by some houses, membership in the upper house of the Polish parliament, or coming from a powerful and influential family, each was an insufficient qualification for becoming a magnate. What is more, even great wealth was considered a necessary but not sufficient condition, with some nobles managing to pass for magnates without having access to substantial resources. The assignment of status by contemporaries within this nobility was largely left to lifestyle: magnates were those who lived like magnates, spectacularly and lavishly enough to dazzle their fellow nobles.

[7] I am not referring here to the use of the Greek term 'aristocracy' in early modern thought and later but to definitions used in historical research. It is not by chance that 'nobility' (*Adel*) and 'aristocracy' (*Aristokratie*) are dealt with together by Werner Conze (Conze & Meier 1992 [1972], 1–48)—the latter viewed just as one of many synonyms for the social élite.

[8] B. Bravo has long been pondering this historical parallel.

[9] For the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and its socio-political problems, see briefly Maczak (1982). A general introduction to the 'ruling nation' of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth can be found in Lukowski (1991) 9–37; cf. Kaminski (1983). In a larger timeframe see also Frost (2007).

Three factors should be taken into consideration: (1) the lack of formal or legal boundaries that distinguished ordinary *szlachta* from the magnates; (2) the importance of wealth as a prerequisite for a sufficiently luxurious and awe-inspiring lifestyle; and more generally, (3) the fact that the term 'magnate' can only work in a very specific legal, social, and ideological context. A nobleman could became a magnate, or an 'elder brother' as they were called, only when his status was compared with that of his economically and politically weaker 'lesser brethren', the masses of country squires.[10]

Similarly, the problem of *formally* separating the aristocracy from others did not exist in archaic Greek society. The only legally defined social category was the citizenry of the *polis*. As a result, the basic constitutive factor of the archaic aristocracy was substantial wealth. The Greeks called the members of their strict élite 'the best' (*aristoi*), 'the good ones' (*agathoi*), or 'the noble ones' (*esthloi*), as opposed to 'the lowborn' (*kakoi*) or 'the vile' (*deiloi*). It is important to stress that this opposition was based not on the contrast between the aristocracy and all free men—the inferior category was comprised of socially and politically weaker members of the body politic. This division makes the Greek aristocrats look very much like the Polish-Lithuanian 'elder brethren'.[11] The similarity is further enhanced when ideology is taken into account. Just as the entire Polish-Lithuanian noble order regarded all its members as 'noble brethren' (*panowie bracia*), all citizens of the many Greek *poleis* perceived themselves to be part of an institution based on mythical kinship, the phratry or 'brotherhood' (*phratria* or *phratra*).[12] And it was a

[10] For the origins of the Polish magnates, see e.g. Litwin (1986). Only taking into account the dominating ideology of the equality of nobles (*równość szlachecka*) can one understand the peculiar status of a group that formally did not differ from the gentry masses, that emphasized their group-solidarity with the gentry whenever it seemed necessary (e.g. by avoiding using aristocratic titles bestowed on them by foreign monarchs), but at the same time had a commanding influence over their fellow nobles thanks to their political prestige and economic strength.

[11] One fundamental difference should be stressed here. The lack of the superior authority of a king, who could actively shape the composition of the group of magnates by granting land or offices, caused the Greek aristocracy to be fairly unstable in economic terms.

[12] From an Indo-European (**bhrāter*) and not Greek (*adelphos*) term for this level of kinship. See in general Roussel (1976), Bourriot (1976), and Murray (1990*c*) 12–16 and *passim* and Benveniste (1969) vol. I, 212–214, 220–222, 257.

purely political and 'pseudo-archaic' entity, believed to originate in the very distant past that encompassed both the *aristoi* and the *kakoi*.

The main conclusion to be had from this comparison is that we cannot use the notion of untitled aristocracy without reference to a wider privileged élite. In other words, some (political) animals can only become more equal where all (political) animals are (theoretically) equal. The notion of untitled aristocracy is always contextual and can be understood only in relation to specific social and ideological circumstances. It is by no means identical with such neutral and rather vague notions as 'élite' and 'upper class'. Throughout this book, I will use 'aristocracy', 'aristocrat' and 'aristocratic' in the sense provided by our archaic sources, namely as technical designations applied by 'the more equal' to themselves, fully aware of their elevated position. From this point of view, I should like to add that the old idea suggesting a close historical link between the rise of the *polis* and the emergence of the Greek aristocracy may still present a promising line of inquiry. I will return to the question of the relationship between these two historical processes in the concluding remarks of my book (6.4). First, however, a more detailed characterization of the group preliminarily defined as 'aristocracy' will be in order.

1.1.3 A Precarious Élite

In a series of papers published since the late 1970s, Benedetto Bravo has proposed an exceptionally original interpretation of archaic Greek society.[13] I find his vision convincing and would therefore like to discuss it briefly.[14] Interestingly, his position combines the testimony of Hesiod, from the outset of the archaic period (and to some extent of the Homeric poems as well), with that of Solon, Theognis, and many elegies of the *Corpus Theognideum*, alongside the poems of Pindar and Bacchylides, at its lower limit. The effect is quite conspicuous, insofar as the social realities and problems underlying and alluded to in the poetry of the entire epoch prove essentially similar.[15]

[13] See esp. Bravo (1977); (1983); (1984); (1985); (1988); (1989); (1990); (1996).

[14] For my disagreement with some elements of this concept, see below, pp. 55–56 n. 141.

[15] The cornerstone of Bravo's theory—the high degree of social mobility and instability of the élites of the Greek *poleis* throughout the archaic period (cf. below in this section)—has gained some popularity in recent scholarship. Sadly, Bravo's

Before the revolutionary changes at the end of the archaic period, only those capable of defending the city in full hoplitic gear were given civic status, thereby qualifying even small landowners. Archaic sources make a distinction between the *aristoi* and the *kakoi* within this group, but both designations were subjective and malleable. In principle, only *aristoi* (aristocrats) had access to positions of authority within the *polis*, as *kakoi* (commoners) were ineligible for public office. And the sharp opposition between the *aristoi* and the *kakoi* functioned as an ideological construct wielded by the aristocrats, boasting of their noble birth and an impressive pedigree that sometimes stretched back to heroic times. However, in the constellation of ideas belonging to the aristocratic ideal, the *aretē* or 'excellence', believed to belong by birth to the *aristoi*, went hand in hand with wealth-prosperity (*olbos*, *ploutos*, etc.), regarded as a sign of divine favour. By this logic, a sudden economic disaster could relegate an aristocrat and his offspring to the position of a commoner. Likewise, an instantaneous material success could raise a *kakos* to the rank of *aristoi*. The primary economic activity of the aristocrats was obviously tied to the land but risky long-distance maritime trade expeditions were also possible. However, it is unlikely that they themselves would often travel, instead relying on the services of socially inferior agents, like ambitious *kakoi*. Trade also provided an opportunity for enrichment for the most enterprising *kakoi*, but this would usually have required entering diverse business partnerships, i.e. with, or borrowing funds from, wealthy aristocrats.

Of course, there were some very rich *agathoi,* who could suffer occasional economic setbacks without fear of social degradation. Similarly, the majority of commoners could not conceive of improving their social standing.[16] Their best chance of success was in securing the political patronage of some powerful aristocrat, many of whom counted on their followers in feuds with other 'magnates'. For the 'patrons', this kind of patronage must have been rewarding, as

recent work has been largely ignored—see, however, Duplouy (2006), who refers only to Bravo's earliest studies on the subject. See also Stahl (1987); cf. Stein-Hölkeskamp (1989) and (1992), Rabinowitz (2000), as well as Van Wees (2000).

[16] Incidentally, I would ascribe the 'systemic' readiness of the masses of the citizens of Greek cities to take part in risky colonial enterprises overseas to their ambition to become aristocrats if participating in the first wave of a successful colonization.

their 'clients' owed them more or less formal services.[17] At the same time, such activity could prove costly in both political and financial terms, as it obliged the leader to provide adequate political, legal, and economic support to his *kakoi* adherents. Failure to do so could seriously damage his prestige.

This is exactly the kind of disastrous situation that Hesiod tried to address in his *Works and Days,* rebuking the *aristoi* (the 'kings' in his conventional epic idiom) for their unjust verdicts and their greed, and the commoners (he uses the character of his younger brother Perses) for immorally and recklessly trying to get rich too quickly.[18] The latter should try to enrich themselves by investing their time and their effort in their farms, without indulging political ambitions not suitable to their status. According to Hesiod, they can start to think about some involvement in politics only when they are wealthy enough to no longer worry about falling back into poverty. The poet is not explicit, but it is clear that wealthy *kakoi* ultimately become aristocrats.

The most important implication of Bravo's theory is that endemic political and social problems affecting many regions of the Greek world throughout the archaic period must have been characterized not only by internal conflicts between members of the aristocracy but principally by the instability of the *aristoi* as a social group. The less powerful and wealthy were certainly threatened by the possibility of ceasing to be regarded as aristocrats by their peers and community. But the most disruptive group resided elsewhere, consisting of those regarded as commoners but ambitious and rich enough to think of themselves as something better—future aristocrats. In order to obtain access to power through office-holding, and, more importantly, to

[17] These services were of course never as ritualized as in the Roman republic. On the other hand, a fragment of Aristotle's *Politeia of the Naxians* (fr. 558 Rose, *ap.* Ath. VIII 348 a–c) shows a fairly formalized situation in archaic Naxos: a wealthy Telestagoras is honoured by the *dēmos* with gifts sent to him daily (we do not know whether they were given individually or on behalf of a group). It is tempting to understand the famous Hesiodic epithet 'gift-devouring kings' (*Op.* 220–221 and 263–264: *βασιλῆς* [or *ἄνδρες*] *δωροφάγοι*) in a similar vein. In the *Works and Days* it looks too formal and possibly conventional to designate just bribed aristocrats. If so, these kings and judges become corrupt because of their obligations towards their respective clients which make them forget about justice, rather than by regular bribes and material profits.

[18] Solon and Theognis also target the unworthy *agathoi* in a similar vein but from different standpoints; cf. below, p. 56 n. 144.

afford an aristocratic lifestyle, they were prepared to take risks by getting involved in politics, colonization, and all kinds of economic activity, including the aforementioned long-distance trade. The utopian ideas of Hesiod, intending to curb the *kakoi*'s ambitions, and the equally idealistic reforms of Solon, extending the right to hold office to those with relatively low income,[19] both suggest that the number of citizens still considered *kakoi* but aspiring to aristocratic status must have been quite large. The problems generated by this situation were serious enough to inspire both Hesiod and Solon.

* * *

Utilizing Bravo's model of archaic Greek society, we should take note of the fact that it does not include the notion of a separate and self-aware class of citizens, mindful of their group interests and acting against the political monopoly of the aristocrats—as with the once popular theory of the 'hoplite class'.[20] On the contrary, what we have are individuals (and families) determined to enter the ranks of the *aristoi* and enjoy the same privileges and lifestyle, with emphasis on this final aspiration. Rather than undermining the social position of the aristocracy, this phenomenon serves as evidence for the undisputed monopoly of aristocratic values dominating the hearts and minds of all ambitious citizens in the archaic Greek *poleis*. In more general terms, I would underline the determinate importance of the aspirations of successful non-aristocrats in shaping the political life of the archaic period. Absent external factors that would stabilize the social élite's economic and political position, such as grants of land or high offices by the monarch, the ambitions of some sections of the Greek 'nobility' to become 'magnates' could be realized. This is the distinctive characteristic of archaic Greek aristocracy.

Assuming that becoming an aristocrat in the Greek world required being perceived as such by peers (achieved through an ostentatiously lavish lifestyle) has far-reaching consequences for our understanding of early Greek history. In the first place, it is essential to remember that definitions of luxury naturally varied between communities. The resources of an aristocrat on the barren island of Paros could look pitiful to neighbours from Naxos. Recognizing the relative nature of aristocratic status and the inherent instability of the group therefore helps us to better understand the archaic Greek city.

[19] In general, cf. Foxhall (1997) esp. 129–132.
[20] Cf. below, p. 330 with n. 65.

1.2 DESCRIBING THE SYMPOSION: A WORKING HYPOTHESIS

1.2.1 Terminology of the Symposion

The fact that our knowledge of the symposion is owed primarily to poetic texts of the archaic and the classical periods is of paramount importance.[21] In the first place, the terminology used by our sources is rather vague and lends itself to misapprehension. The terms we encounter are subject to genre conventions, artistic licence, aesthetic considerations and, finally, even the metrical choices of a given author. Therefore, the word 'symposion' (*συμπόσιον*),[22] and its equivalents such as *potos*, *posis*, *symposia* (*συμποσία*),[23] as well as the relevant verb-forms of *sympinō*,[24] are at times replaced by more solemn and conventional epic terms such as *dais*, *eilapinē*, *thoinē*.[25] In addition, 'symposion' is often absorbed into more general terms designating 'feast' or 'festival'; nouns such as *deipnon*, *syndeipnon*, *syssition*, *syssitia*, *hestiasis*, *hypodochē*, and even *heortē* (and their related verbs) can indiscriminately be applied to the drinking bout following the sacrificial feast as well as to the *deipnon* proper. We also find more neutral terms that do not bring to mind the act of 'drinking' in some authors.[26] This terminological fluidity and vagueness notwithstanding, our

[21] See in general Casevitz (1990). Cf. also Rundin (1996).

[22] For the earliest occurrences of this term, see Alkaios, fr. 70 L–P, l. 3 and Phocylides, fr. 14 G–P (on this fragment, see briefly below, p. 118).

[23] But also *bakcheia* or *kōmos* as a metonymy for the symposion. Other periphrases were due to some elements of the sympotic ritual; see below, pp. 67–68 with n. 173 and p. 70.

[24] Sympotic activities can naturally be described as doing something *ἐν οἴνῳ*, *παρὰ πότον*, or *ἐν ταῖς κύλιξι*, i.e. 'over wine' or 'over the cups'.

[25] For these terms, see below, pp. 196–202. The sheer fact that the term symposion does not figure in the Homeric epic, and that the noble 'heroic feast' in Homer in many ways contradicts the symposion itself, was a serious handicap in a genre as traditionalistic or conservative as archaic Greek elegy.

[26] See e.g. *synodos*, *synousia*, *synagōgion*, *synagōgimon*; but also *eranos*, *thiasos*, *xenismos*, *xenisis*. Of course, some of these terms had a precise meaning as well. For *eranos,* see Vondeling (1961) and Longo (1983). For the terms replacing the term 'symposion' in Plato's *Laws*, see Tecuşan (1990), 245–246 n. 17. For more on the symposion and wine in Plato, see Boyancé (1951) and Brunet (1990); and Tecuşan (1990) *passim*. For *Laws,* cf. also Jouët-Pastré (2003).

[27] For the sake of convenience, I will conventionally use the terms 'banquet', 'wine party' or 'drinking bout' for the symposion alongside the relevant Greek terms,

sources are unambiguous enough to make it possible to develop a detailed picture of the actual course of the symposion.[27]

1.2.2 Organization of the Symposion: Its Framework and Participants

What is particularly striking about the symposion is its time frame. In fr. 146 K–A, Epicharmus says (*ap.* Athen. II 36 c–d; tr. S. D. Olson, adapted): '(A.) † A sacrifice leads to a feast (ἐκ μὲν θυσίας θοίνα), | and a feast leads to drinking (*posis*). | . . . But drinking leads to wandering the streets drunk (*kōmos*), and a *kōmos* leads to swinish behaviour (*hyania*), | and acting swinishly leads to a lawsuit, <and a lawsuit leads to being found guilty >, | and being found guilty leads to shackles, stocks, and a fine.'[28] Despite the amusing judicial climax of this convivial sequence, the pattern is a regular one: the symposion naturally follows a *deipnon*, or a formal dinner, and the diners often go on revelling in the streets on their way back from the party.[29] This sequence makes the timetable of the symposion rather vague,[30] since the wine party only begins when the *deipnon* is over and will come to an end when the fellow-drinkers, or what is left of them at this point, decide to go for a *kōmos*.

That being said, the general time frame is particularly clear from what is taken for granted when joking about the matter. Thus, in Menander (fr. 265 K–A = 304 Koerte = 304 Sandbach; *ap.* Athen. VI 243 a) we find the parasite Chaerephon so eager to take part in the feast (*hestiasis*), to which he was invited to arrive 'when the sundial

whereas 'feast' and 'dinner' stand for *deipnon*. The erudite book by Catoni (2010) was published too late for me to integrate her argument fully into my own study; I have only been able to refer the Reader to this book regarding some particularly important issues (cf. also my review of Catoni 2010 in Wecowski 2011*b*).

[28] For a brief comm. on this fragment, see Olson (2007) 59–60. The amusing argument of this fragment bears some resemblance to Aristophanes' *Wasps*, ll. 1126–1128 and 1252–1255.

[29] For instance, Xenophon's symposion ends in the night without a *kōmos* (*Symp.* 9, 7).

[30] Cf., e.g., the difficult setting of the beginning of Plato's symposion (174 d–176 a). In a fragment from the parodist Matro of Pitane (fr. 1 Olson–Sens, l. 13), we find an amusing reference to the freedom of the cooks of a wealthy Athenian to postpone or to hasten the moment when the *deipnon* begins.

[31] This seems topical given that a similar story is told by Eubulus (fr. 117 K–A; *ap.* Athen. I 8 b–c) about the parasite Philocrates.

was at 12 feet', that he raced off 'as if he were late' when seeing the shadow in the moonlight 'and was there when the sun rose' (ἅμ' ἠμέρᾳ).[31] The point, we may surmise, is that he arrived at the party exactly when the previous day's festivities were over, whereas he was supposed to come just before sunset on the next day.[32] As *hestiasis* here stands for *deipnon*, the imaginary diners would therefore start their symposion at some point after dark. In a famous poem by Alkaios, the poetic persona, indicating amongst other things his extremely immoderate plans for the incoming symposion,[33] encourages his friends not to wait for 'the lamps' (i.e. for the lamps illuminating the dining-hall or perhaps, metaphorically, for the stars), since 'there is only an inch of day left' (346 L–P, l. 1, tr. D. A. Campbell). When another poet is going to give a synthetic vision of the banquet, one of his metonymies of the symposion may well be a song (*aoidē*) that goes through the night (Ion of Chios, fr. 27 W^2, l. 7).

The *kōmos*, the drunken revel of the diners, may or may not form the coda of any given symposion.[34] Images of individual symposiasts sneaking out from the party or leaving it openly, as well as

[32] For another amusing example of holding the *deipnon* in the evening and ending the whole gathering (i.e. the symposion) at sunrise, see *Theognidea*, ll. 861–864. In *Theognidea* 997–1102, the idea of stopping the *deipnon* just after midday is probably rather excessive (see Van Groningen 1966, 374–376, *ad loc.*). On the other hand, the funny notion of Eubulus (fr. 52 K–A; *ap.* Athen. X 417 d) that Boeotians held their *deipna* all night long is as strong a mark of their gargantuan lifestyle as the fact that they all have their toilets 'right next to the doors'. A short dithyrambic fr. 6 Page [*PMG* 745] K–A of Ion of Chios ('we waited for the Dawn-star, air roaming, white-winged fore-runner of the sun'; tr. D. A. Campbell) may also be drawn from a sympotic context. An unusually sober party hosted by the philosopher Menedemos will also end at dawn: Athen. II 55 c-d (quoting a satyr play by the third-century Lycophron of Chalcedon, *TrGF* 100 fr. 4).

[33] For this aspect of the poem, see below, pp. 42 and 86.

[34] For the *kōmos* in Aristophanes, see Pütz (2007) 121–150 (esp. pp. 142–146). Cf. Gossel-Raeck (1990*a*), (1990*b*), (1990*c*); Kaeser (1990). We may use a beautiful fragment of a paean by Bacchylides to visualize the moment when the *kōmos* takes place (fr. 4 Snell–Maehler, ll. 75–80; tr. D. A. Campbell): 'There is no din of bronze trumpets, and sleep, honey for the mind, still soothing the heart at daybreak, is not pillaged from men's eyelids. The streets are laden with lovely feasts (συμποσίων δ' ἐρατὼν βρίθοντ' ἀγυιαί), and the songs in praise of boys rise like flame'.

[35] See, e.g., Anacreon, fr. 67 Page [*PMG* 412] (= 107 Gentili); Xenophanes, fr. B 1 W^2 ll. 17–18; *Theognidea*, 503–508; 841–844, as well as the poem in the *Theogn.* ascribed to Euenos as fr. 8a W^2, esp. ll. 467–485 (cf. comm. *ad loc.* in Van Groningen 1966; see also below, p. 69). Cf. Plut. *Quaest. conv.* VII 710 e (a departing diner shouting for his shoes and for his servant equipped with a lamp). For the opposite of a decent return back home by a decent diner, see, e.g., Epicharmus, fr. 32 K–A, ll. 8–15, on which see also below, p. 62 n. 157.

poems encouraging dizzy feasters to do so, are abundant in archaic poetry.[35]

Now, it is difficult to assess how often Greek aristocrats participated in all-night symposia.[36] The fourth-century Athenian physician, Mnesitheos, author of the letter *On Hard Drinking* cited by Athenaeus (XI 483 f–484 a), interestingly argued that occasional hard drinking (*kōthōnismos*) has a salutary, that is, purgatory, effect on the human body.[37] I think that the context of this idea in Athenaeus's quotation shows that the physician took for granted not only the possibility of drinking large quantities of unmixed wine (*ἄκρατον πολύν*), which seemed harmful to him, but also fairly regular symposia. In a similar vein, we should allow for a reasonable amount of comic exaggeration and distortion of reality when reading a fragment by Alexis (fr. 160 K–A; *ap*. Athen. 421 a–b), but, in the context of his argument, it would be absurd if symposia attended by the same group of people were rarely held: 'For the long gathering (*ἡ μακρὰ συνουσία*) and the many symposia day after day (*τὰ συμπόσια τὰ πολλὰ καὶ καθ' ἡμέραν*) are wont to produce mockery (*ποιεῖν σκῶψιν*) . . .'.[38]

Be that as it may, frequent night-time drinking till dawn, potentially followed by noisy carousing on the streets, requires our attention as an ostentatious social practice.

No less important is the setting where sympotic activities usually took place. In archaic and classical times, the sympotic room was called *andrōn*, literally the 'men's chamber'.[39] Such rooms formed an important part of wealthy houses, but could also be found, often built in rows or clusters, in public spaces (such as the Athenian Agora) and

[36] As far as I can tell, no indication to this effect can be found in the extant corpus of archaic poetry. Specific literary cases, such as Plato's depiction of his characters in the *Banquet* as still intoxicated after the previous night's festivities in honour of Agathon's theatrical victory (176 a–e), are obviously of no use.

[37] For drinking and hangover, see recently Pütz (2007) 167–172.

[38] On 'jibes' or banter (*skōmmata*) as a form of sympotic entertainment, see below, pp. 50–53.

[39] For a list of the most important literary testimonies to this term, see e.g. Tedeschi (1991*a*) [1978], 97 n. 3. Cf. also Lynch (2007) for some reservations about a too strict application of the notion of *andrōn*, which in daylight might have served non-convivial and even non-masculine activities as well. I believe Morgan (2011) goes too far in her interesting re-evaluation of the classical *andrōn*.

[40] An early structure of this kind attested in our literary sources may be the mysterious 'big house' in Alkaios, fr. 357 L–P (= 140 Voigt). See also below, 3.3.3.

in sacred precincts (such as the sanctuary of Asklepios on the south slopes of the Athenian Acropolis).[40] Besides accommodating the drinking parties of some magistrates, we may assume that such rooms were available for rent by private citizens. In private houses, but presumably also in some public *hestiatoria*, walls were richly decorated with objects of strong symbolism and considerable artistic value, including pieces of armour (shields, cuirasses, swords, etc.) and finely painted pottery or musical instruments in use during the symposia (mainly string instruments, but also e.g. castanets). Feasts and night-time banquets could also be held in temporary settings such as tents or even in rooms or halls designed for other uses but adapted to the needs of the symposion. In the first place, such adaptation would involve the limiting of the space to accommodate only a small number of diners, perhaps through the use of special or improvised screens or hung tapestry. This is the critical fact about the sympotic space as such: it had to be cozy and small enough to produce a sense of intimacy and even confidentiality among the participants of the symposion.[41]

One element of sympotic equipment is especially meaningful, namely the lamps that made these nocturnal gatherings in small rooms possible.[42] As archaeological evidence, their presence in small, separate, and rather isolated chambers may theoretically be one of the ideal material indicators of this type of banquet. Another

[41] For the organization of the sympotic space, see in particular Bergquist (1990). Recently, cf. briefly Murray (2009) 511–512. In general, see esp. Dunbabin (1998). Cf. also Will (1976); Börker (1983); Cooper & Morris (1990); Dunbabin (2003) esp. 36–38. Cf. already Frickenhaus (1917). *Non vidi:* Ch. Leypold, *Bankettgebäude in Griechischen Heiligtümern* (Wiesbaden, 2008). In an illuminating paper, Lynch (2007) rightly points out that actually no special room is needed to hold a successful symposion; the diners might just be placed on pillows on the ground (as some vase-painting may suggest) in the household courtyard.

[42] This was obvious to ancient writers so our sources rarely refer to lamps per se in this context; see, however, Xen. *Symp*. 5, 2; 7, 4; cf. Athen. 474 d; 699 d–701 b (mentioned alongside lamps used by the diners on their way back home in the dark); Plut. *Queast. conv.* 716 d–e; Pollux, VI 103.

[43] In the classical period (and partly in the Hellenistic epoch as well) other material indicators of the banquets come to the fore, namely asymmetrical entrances to such rooms (resulting from the need to accommodate the longer side of one *klinē* and the shorter side of another along the same wall), water-supply facilities, drains and washable floors (mosaic bands, less elaborate than those covering the middle of the floor, may encircle the room following its walls; on these *klinai* were located), and supports or fixings for the legs of the movable *klinai*, where permanent (stone or plaster) benches are absent.



Figure 1.1 Red-figure *kylix* of Duris (*c.*480 BC), Florence, Museo Archeologico Etrusco, 3922 (= The Beazley Archive, no. 205099). Drawing by F. Lissarrague. Courtesy of F. Lissarrague

fundamental piece of sympotic paraphernalia are the couches, or *klinai*, on which diners reclined.[43] (See Figure 1.1.) As I will try to show later in this book, reclining when dining and drinking is not a *sine qua non* of the symposion, but the regular use of *klinai* (or *stibades*),[44] beginning at some point late in the seventh century BC, betokens—and brings to technical perfection, so to say—an essential feature of the symposion, namely the ultimate propensity not only for practical comfort but for ostentatious luxury and sumptuousness laden with almost 'kingly' Oriental overtones.

The overall arrangement of *klinai* within the sympotic room yields another fundamental feature of the ideal setting of the symposion. When compared with the character of the equally luxurious Roman *triclinium*, with its clearly defined hierarchical order and 'centripetal'

[44] For the sympotic furniture in general, see Boardman (1990*a*). In general, cf. below, 3.5.

[45] See Dunbabin (1998) and Dunbabin (1991) and, in particular, (2003) esp. 38–46 (with fig. 21 on p. 43). For the Hellenistic and Roman royal banquets, see in general Vössing (2004). Cf. also D'Arms (1990) esp. 311–319, for the idea of equality at Roman feasts. For Plutarch's ideals, forming a case apart, see below, pp. 71–73. In any case, the Roman ideal of convivial equality seems deeply influenced by reminiscences of Greek theories in this respect, stemming as they did from the ideals and practices of the archaic and classical symposion. For sympotic equality, see below, 1.3.2.

arrangement of its triple couches,[45] the Greek *andrōn* is striking for its simple alignment of several couches along the walls. This was a consciously egalitarian arrangement of the convivial space, making intimate contact and, especially, equal communication between the diners possible.[46] As a result, however, distances between non-neighbouring diners grew, making organized entertainment necessary in order to prevent the atomizing of the symposion into separate smaller circles. On the one hand, the symposion was supervised by the symposiarch, or the 'king of drinking'[47] and, on the other, there was a peculiar organization of drinking rounds, with cups circulating around the dining-hall.[48]

* * *

At first glance, the symposion participants represent clearly defined groups. Of course, there are attendants called 'boys' (or 'girls', *paides*), presumably in most cases of servile status,[49] responsible for serving the diners. Amongst these, the cup-bearer (*oinochoos*) is of special importance. The social status, education, and degree of participation of courtesans in the symposion have been greatly contested.[50] In our sources, both iconographic and literary, they are often identified with

[46] Cf. Dunbabin (2003) 40, on 'networking, the complex exchange of favours and obligations' in the Roman *triclinium*.

[47] See below, pp. 36–38.

[48] Below, Chapter 2.

[49] This is a controversial issue. Bremmer (1990) esp. 139–141 argues that the 'beardless, sometimes nude wine-pourers' (p. 139) of the archaic and early classical vase painting were regularly boys of aristocratic status (against their servile status as well but less univocally, Hoesch 1990*b*, esp. 235), but the dossier cited to this effect (leaving aside obviously inconclusive poems addressed to such boys) is almost exclusively concerned with public festive occasions (cf. famously Sappho, 203a–c Voigt [= fr. 203 L–P]), which may not be accidental. The girls occasionally pouring wine at symposia (if we leave aside mythical characters featuring in our sources in this capacity) must have been slaves (see e.g. Anacreon, fr. 38 Page [*PMG* 383]; cf. *Theogn*. 1001–1002): it would be difficult to envision aristocratic boys replacing them or mixing in their company. I deal with this issue more thoroughly in Wecowski (2013) The Homeric *kouroi* appearing in this capacity will be dealt with below, p. 207 with n. 71.

[50] In general, see Cohen (2006), cf. Davidson (1997) 73–167 (as well as Index, *s.v.* 'prostitutes and courtesans') and, briefly, Hoesch (1990*a*). Recently, see also Corner (2011) and Glazebrook (2012), with updated bibliography, and cf. Kelly Blazenby (2011) and Coccagna (2011). Cf. Corner (2012), rightly responding in the negative to a recent attempt by Burton (1998) to introduce 'respectable' women, and not only courtesans, to the classical (and early Hellenistic) symposion.

[51] For them, cf. e.g. Starr (1978) and Davidson (1997), esp. 91–97 (an excellent treatment of the issue).

female musicians, such as pipe (*aulos*) players, accompanying the diners.[51] However, the courtesans seem to participate in at least some of the sympotic entertainments, such as the *kottabos* game (see below), on an equal footing with the dining aristocrats and it is for that reason that they bear the euphemistic appellation of *hetairai*, plural feminine of *hetairos*, 'fellow[-drinker]' or 'comrade'.

The full members of the sympotic group are not only called *hetairoi*, but also refer to one another as *philoi*, i.e. 'friends', or *philoi hetairoi*, 'dear friends'.[52] Their other appellations are coined with the more or less conventional terms designating the symposion,[53] quoting a late list provided by Pollux (VI 13–15):[54] *homositoi*; *syssitoi*; *synousiastai*; *thasōtai* (or *thasitai*); *eilapinastai*; *eranistai*; but, most often, simply *sympotai*. Interestingly, the most important division within the group of fellow-diners is between the adult, full members of the group and youngsters or *neoi*, brought to the symposion by their father, older brothers, or other male relatives. Such *neoi* were not reclining but sitting on the couch of their 'patrons' and in principle were not permitted to drink or speak unless they were asked to do so.[55] Aristotle suggests that the appropriate age to let the young attend comedies and iambic performances should correspond to the time they reached manhood (*hēlikia*) and were able to join in reclining and in drunkenness (1336b 20–22). Therefore, the *neoi* must have been adolescents, not yet in their later teens. They were only potential *sympotai*, enjoying the mere occasion to learn aristocratic culture and its ideals from their elders and, to a certain degree, open to homosexual courtship by adult diners.[56]

Two more terms, both of them technical in the classical period and both plainly derogatory, introduce further nuances to the issue. First,

[52] See e.g. Donlan (1995*a*). [53] Cf. above, 1.2.1.

[54] Cf. also Pollux, VI 11–12, for the names of 'those invited' to the symposion; cf. below on 'those uninvited'.

[55] Cf., e.g., Xen., *Symp.* 1, 8; Arist. *Pol.* 1336b 20–23 (with 1336b 9–10). For a youngster (his age is not explicitly stated but clear enough from the context) profiting from his fellow-diner's wisdom when sitting beside him, see also *Theognidea*, ll. 563–566. Cf. also below, p. 56, for Theognis' Kyrnos sitting at symposia.

[56] On attitudes towards the young at the symposion (including pederasty), see in particular Bremmer (1990) and Booth (1991) esp. 113–117. In general, cf. Davidson (1997) Index *s.v.* 'homosexuality', as well as the classical synthesis by Dover (1989) [1978]. Recently, see also Lengauer (2006); Davidson (2007). See also below, 1.5 (Appendix II), for a brief discussion of eroticism at symposia.

those called the 'uninvited' (*aklētoi*) come to a dinner or symposion as party-crashers and, in return for food and drink, are expected to perform some amusing and, in particular, humiliating activities, thereby becoming 'laughter-makers' (*gelōtopoioi*).[57] In later times, they will become an important element in the Graeco-Roman convivial landscape as 'parasites'.[58] Another group, of incomparably higher position amongst the diners, are those called 'shadows' (*skiai*).[59] They come to a feast or party as hangers-on, invited by some of the invited guests rather than the host. They participate in the sympotic entertainments on an equal footing, yet their status remains less than honourable. Their position is at best ambiguous, and include those for some reason forgotten or omitted by the host, and those freshly introduced to the group by one of the invited guests, who thereby become their 'patrons' of a sort. If permanently accepted by their new companions, we may surmise, they would henceforth be formally invited. Now, the existence of the well-defined groups of *neoi*, *aklētoi* and the more vaguely distinguishable *skiai*, suggests certain inner dynamics within the group of *sympotai*—age-dynamics in the first case, and social in the two other cases. All such divisions follow the same logic, as they emphasize the exceptional position of the full members of the group and full participants in the symposion. As we shall see later in this chapter, this privileged status makes it possible for them all to think of themselves as essentially equal.

1.2.3 Organization of the Symposion: Ceremony and Entertainment

The traditional procedure of the symposion is also indicative of some fundamental features of this occasion and social institution.

[57] See esp. Fehr (1990) with further references. In general, cf. also Bremmer (1997) and Catoni (2010) 33–46.

[58] Cf. also Athen. 274 e and esp. 613 d–616 d. From secondary literature, see esp. Martin (1931) esp. 51–79, Wüst (1949), and Wilkins (2000) esp. 71–86 and *passim*. Cf. also Vössing (2004) 223–224.

[59] See Pl. *Symp*. 174 a–e. Cf. Alkaios, fr. 368 L–P and *Theogn*. 511–522 (more on these lines below, pp. 62–63). In general, cf., also for the term, Plut. *Quaest. conv*. 706 f–710 a. Cf. Vössing (2004) 222–223.

[60] Cf., famously, Socrates in Pl. *Symp*. 175 c. I think that belated diners were obliged to drink a 'penalty drink' (one or more cups) called 'the equalizer' (*anisōma*). Cf. Athen. X 446 f–448 b, with reference to Anacreon, fr. 82 Page (*PMG* 427).

Some guests would naturally arrive only to participate in the symposion,[60] or even later on in the evening, but the majority would be there at the beginning of the *deipnon*. Hence, one of the most important elements of the whole procedure took place at this early point. It was called *kataklisis* and involved everyone in the dining hall lying down in accordance with the wishes of the host.[61] As already mentioned, the order was fairly egalitarian. Technically speaking, some couches were perceived as located 'above' or 'below' others.[62] The first *klinē* to the right of the entrance was called the 'first one' and was regarded as particularly honourable,[63] whereas the first to the left of the entrance was called the 'last one'.[64] However, the order of the diners was never critically important. The host might cede the 'first' couch to a senior or especially cherished guest and take the 'last' one for himself, as Agathon did in Plato's *Banquet*.[65] A good host would position his guests in a pragmatic way, taking their social intimacies or reservations into account.[66] The arrangement of guests in the *andrōn* was clearly about good fun and not social hierarchy.

In this respect, one more decision was to be made at the outset, although it was most probably deferred to the beginning of the symposion proper, namely the choice of the so-called symposiarch (*symposiarchos* or *symposiarchēs*), i.e. 'toastmaster', lit. 'president of

[61] See, e.g., Pl. *Symp*. 174 a, 175 d; cf. 213 b, 233 b as well as Xen. *Symp*. 1, 8; cf. Plut. *Quaest. conv*. 618 a. By way of a contrast, cf. Pl. *Symp*. 223 b.

[62] Cf. Plut. *Sept. sap. conv*. 150 b. Cf. also Ar. *Vespae* 1216.

[63] See, e.g., Pl. *Symp*. 177 d; cf. Plut. *Sept. sap. conv*. 151 e.

[64] See Pl. *Symp*. 177 e; Athen. 245 a–c. Cf. Plut. *Sept. sap. conv*. 148 f–149 b; *Quaest. conv*. 615 d.

[65] As we shall see, this does not point to a strictly observed hierarchy of couches but belongs to the practicalities of the sympotic contests. Not unimportantly, it was the silly but beautiful Phaedrus who ultimately occupied the first couch in Plato's *Banquet*. This 'anomaly' may be due to the absence of the symposiarch in this symposion.

[66] This is usually implied, although not stated openly, in literary descriptions of the symposion such as the *Banquet* by Plato. Note, however, that Plutarch's discussion on the matter in *Quaest. conv*. (615 d–617 a; cf. 619 b–e) is entirely anachronistic as it confounds the *realia* of the classical symposion with those of the Roman *cena*, thus coming up with two diametrically contrasting 'ideologies' of the good *kataklisis*.

[67] For the names, see Pollux, XI 11 (with some terminological confusion involved). Cf., perhaps, *Anacreontea* 2 and 3 West (= 2 Bergk^4, for both poems); *Adesp. eleg*. fr. 27 W^2 (see below, p. 73, on this elegy). In general, cf. Plut. *Quaest. conv*. 620 a–622 b. Cf. also Pellizer (1990) 178–179 (with n. 7 for the names), for the symposiarch and the sympotic norms regulating 'an elaborate *ars bibendi*'.

the drinking party', also known as the 'king' (*basileus* or *archōn*) or 'leader' (*hēgemōn* or *prytanis*) of the symposion.[67] The procedure involved is not entirely clear, but we may envision a regular vote by the diners[68] or a consensus suggested or even stipulated by the host, who was expected to know the convivial expertise, social skills, psychological disposition, physical shape, and endurance of his guests with respect to alcohol. For it was the symposiarch's duty to efficiently oversee an orderly symposion, including negotiating beforehand the rules of the night's drinking (the quantity and strength of the wine to be served) and keeping the sympotic entertainments cultured, suggesting appropriate themes of sympotic table talk, restraining drunken diners, etc.[69]

Despite his autocratic title, the symposiarch was just a technical supervisor of the party. It is important to realize that far from imposing some overarching authority over the diners, this institution must have had the effect, among other things, of limiting the natural influence of the host on the party held in his house, thereby providing guests more freedom and autonomy as a group. In the first place, it was crucial to prevent the group from disintegrating into smaller social units, indulging in individual conversations, or allowing a single overtalkative symposiast to dominate the gathering.[70] The symposion and its idiosyncratic entertainments only made sense, as we shall see shortly, when the whole group shared their drinks, talks, and diverse pastimes with one another. In breach of such 'sympotic rules' (*sympotikoi nomoi*), the sympotic corpus regularly testifies that

[68] See Alcibiades parodying this in Pl. *Symp*. 213 e; cf. Xen. *Anab*. VI 1,30; Plut. *Quaest. conv*. 620 a.

[69] Despite the responsibility involved in this job, Plato's idea that the symposiarchs presiding over symposia should be abstinent, over sixty, and should be given a very strong authority (*Leg*. II, cf. 671 d–674 c, cf. 640 c–d, with Tecuşan (1990), esp. 251–255; cf. Arist. *Pol*. 1274 b 12) must have been alien to an ordinary Greek. Cf. a comic pun about a symposiarch becoming in fact a public executioner when imposing too much strong drinking on the company: Alexis, fr. 21 K–A (Olson 2007, no. H12, with comm. *ad loc.*).

[70] Cf. below, p. 71 with n. 182.

[71] Cf., famously, ten *kraters* mentioned by Dionysus in Eubulus's fr. *93 K–A (Olson 2007, no. H18, with comm. *ad loc.*), of which only three belong to the divinity, who pledges no responsibility for the disastrous effects of the other seven mixing-bowls drunk in the course of a symposion, since 'a lot of wine poured into one small cup' (i.e., I think, into the body of a diner; *pace* Olson *ad loc.*) is harmful.

the communal spirit and simple decorum of the diners did not hold sway (as is natural in what might be a party of heavy drinking),[71] but the presence of a skilled symposiarch must have curbed antisocial drunken excesses to a considerable extent.

* * *

At this juncture, we may focus on the ritual aspect of the ceremony of the symposion. What is generally reliable in our sources is its introductory procedure.[72] This included elaborate rites marking the transition from the preceding *deipnon* to the symposion.[73] At the end of the *deipnon*, the tables set in front of each couch were taken out of the dining-room,[74] thus permitting not only the cleaning of the floor (a symbolic act in itself) but also the performance of a series of ritual gestures most probably executed standing up and not reclining. At the same time, the diners had to give back the garlands they wore during the *deipnon*. First, they ceremonially washed their hands and prostrated themselves thrice before a god (Dionysus?), performing the act of *proskynesis*. An 'after-ablution cup' (*metaniptris* or *metaniptron*)[75] of undiluted wine was then offered to perform a libation to a Good Daemon (most probably an apotropaic name for the dangerous aspect of Dionysus),[76] from which they only drank a small sip.[77] To my mind, it remains unclear what the relationship was between this libation and that of wine possibly mixed half and half (a mixture that was regarded as unusually strong), which incidentally also took place at the outset of the symposion and used the *metaniptris*, in honour of Hygieia, the goddess of Health. The

[72] See esp. Xenophanes's grave and solemn fr. B 1 W^2. For a series of parodistic images of the introductory rites of the symposion (with the respective comm. *ad locc.* in Olson 2007), see esp. Plato Comicus, fr. 71 K–A; Nicostratus Comicus, fr. 27 K–A; Clearchus Comicus, fr. 4 K–A; Ephippus, fr. 8 K–A; Diphilus, fr. 70 K–A; Antiphanes, fr. 172 K–A.

[73] See esp. Philoxenos of Leucas, *PMG* 836(a)+(b) and Matro of Pitane, fr. 1 Olson–Sens, ll. 104–111; cf. Pl. *Symp.* 174 a; Plut. *Sept. sap. conv.* 150 d–e.

[74] See, e.g., Xen. *Symp.* 2, 1 (with Woldinga 1938, *ad loc.*); as well as, perhaps, Semonides, fr. 26 W^2. Cf. Plut. *Quaest. conv.* 635 b and 723 b.

[75] For this, see esp. Athen. 486 e–487 b, with numerous pertinent quotations adduced, mostly from comic poets.

[76] Misunderstood already by the sources of D.S. IV 3, 4.

[77] The most detailed depiction of this rite is a fragment of Theophrastus's treatise, *On Drunkenness*, fr. 123 Wimmer (*ap.* Athen. XV 693 c–d). See also Ar. *Eq.* 85, 106–108; *Pax* 300; sch *Vesp.* 525. Cf. Athen. II 38 d and XV 675 b. In general, cf. Ganschinietz (1918) esp. coll. 40–41 and recently Dunand (1981) esp. 277.

transitional rites, so to say, were completed by a very peculiar gesture: the diners clapped their hands.

The beginning of the symposion proper was signalled by carrying the tables back into the *andrōn* (this was also regarded as a *pars pro toto* of the symposion as such, accordingly called 'the second tables', *deuterai trapezai*)[78] and by the appearance of a *krater* of diluted wine in the dining room. Simultaneously, the symposiasts were given new garlands which were sometimes anointed with perfumes.[79] They now reclined again and performed additional introductory rites, including a triple libation of mixed wine honouring Zeus the Olympian (or another Olympian god), some hero or heroes, and finally Zeus the Saviour (*Sōtēr*). At some point, they joined in unison singing of a paean, a choral song most often addressed to Apollo in his capacity as a healer or saviour of mortals.[80]

It is worthwhile to note that all the rites executed before tackling the sympotic pastimes and entertainment—ritual ablutions, *proskynesis*, clapping of hands, fragrant garlands,[81] choral paean and, not least, libations addressed to healer or saviour divinities—have something in common, namely an apotropaic character, as if insuring the diners against the dangers inherent in the symposion. This menace is usually understood pragmatically as resulting from the subsequent excessive consumption of wine[82]—the kingdom of Dionysus is a dangerous realm indeed, in which the help of Hygieia becomes truly indispensable. While this is no doubt true, it will become clear later in this chapter that there was something more to be feared than just the intoxication and hubristic behaviour incited by alcohol.

[78] See e.g. Philoxenos of Leukas, *PMG* 836(e), l. 3; cf. Pi. *Ol.* I 50; Dicaearchus, fr. 19 Wehrli (*ap.* Athen. XIV 641 e). Cf. also comm. *ad loc.* in Matro, fr. 1 Olson–Sens, l. 111.

[79] In general, cf. comm. *ad loc.* in Matro, fr. 1 Olson–Sens, l. 107.

[80] For the sympotic libations, see in particular Lissarrague (1995); cf. Lissarrague (1985) and Laurens (1985). For the *paian*, see in particular Blumenthal (1942) esp. cols. 2348–2348; Fabbro (1991); and cf. Ford (2006). Cf. also Rudhardt (1992) 183–185.

[81] Fragrant garlands seem to indicate, among other things, entering into a dangerously close contact with a divinity. Von der Mühll (1976*a*) [1957], after Fustel de Coulanges, emphasizes rather the initiatory symbolism of garlands and the other introductory rites of the symposion (on the ritual side of the symposion, see ibid., esp. 11–12). Cf. also Nilsson (1951) on the gods of the symposion, and recently Hobden (2011).

[82] Cf. already Theophrastus cited above, n. 77.

On many levels, the symposion was intended to provide its participants, if only momentarily, with superhuman joy and happiness. As such, it was in itself a hubristic act and thus potentially offensive to the 'eternally happy' gods who needed to be fended off or placated by recourse to the complex apotropaic ritual described above.

We are far less well informed about the closing ritual of the symposion. This is understandable given the literary conventions of our archaic and classical sources, but also in view of what we might envision as the practice of a drunken gathering. What must have attracted the attention of both writers and actual diners was the ensuing drunken procession (*kōmos*). However, our late testimonies seem to confirm what might be expected: ideally, libations to different gods must have played an important role when dissolving the symposion.[83]

* * *

With the introductory rites executed, the symposiarch designated, the rules of drinking agreed upon, and the wine mixed for the diners, the participants turned to the pastimes representing the very heart of the symposion.

The word symposion literally means 'drinking together', and therefore when discussing the entertainments that the symposion provided to its participants it seems reasonable to start with wine drinking. I would like to dwell on this issue slightly longer than is perhaps necessary in this context, although such attention is exculpated by the fact that this side of sympotic gaming and merrymaking has curiously eluded the attention of the majority of scholars in the field, as if it belonged to the realm of *realia* that lack particular interest for the global picture of this institution. If one takes into account, as the next chapter will in greater detail, the fact that all other types of communal activities during a symposion, including those of an intellectual character, were clearly modelled on ritualized modes of wine consumption, this is a particularly unfortunate scholarly oversight. Literary and iconographic sources abound in scenes and allusions to

[83] See Pollux, VI 100, with reference to Homer though (cf. VI 112, for dismissing the party); cf. Plut. *Sept. sap. conv.* 164 d; and esp. Athen. 701 f (alas, a desperately corrupt passage).

[84] In general, for the iconography of the *krater*, see esp. Lissarrague (1990*a*). Cf. also Lissarrague (1987) 23–48.

wine mixing.[84] What exactly is being done with the wine in the course of a symposion rarely comes to the fore (an entirely understandable fact from the perspective of relevant literary and iconographic conventions)—with the sole exception of the *kottabos* game (see below).

Drinking diluted wine in an orderly manner was clearly not enough for the Greek aristocratic diners. Although the Greeks considered drinking neat wine a barbaric and harmful custom,[85] characteristic of 'alcoholics' (*oinophlyges*),[86] or advisable for the treatment of certain illnesses, particularly feminine ones,[87] we do hear of a contest in drinking neat wine (*akratoposia*) organized by Alexander the Great (Plut. *Alex.* 70, 1–2).[88] There are good reasons to believe that such games, on a minor scale, might have taken place sporadically in regular symposia of archaic and classical times as well.[89] Meanwhile, there can be no doubt as to the existence of the game consisting in 'drinking much', i.e. drinking more wine faster than usual.

I have already mentioned the fourth-century Athenian physician Mnesitheos and his theory of the good use of (sporadic) hard drinking (*kōthōnismos*).[90] In the Aristotelian *Problemata* (872 b 28), a late compilation dependent on Aristotle, Theophrastus, and the *Corpus Hippocraticum*, we find the strange idea that 'those drinking hard from large cups

[85] See, famously, Hdt. VI {84, 1 and 3}, on the Spartan king Kleomenes learning this custom from the Scythians and ultimately maddened by it; cf. Ael. *VH* II 41. In general, for the symbolism of drinking, and pouring out, diverse liquids among the Greeks, cf. Graf (1980) esp. 215–217 (with further references in n. 41).

[86] See e.g. Arist. *Pr.* 871 a 28. Cf. Arist. *Poet.* 1461 a 15, a passage that seems to imply the existence of such 'wild parties' featuring, or featuring at some point, the drinking of unmixed wine (cf. also below, nn. 94 and 96).

[87] See e.g. Hp. *Aph.* 6, 31 (*akratoposiē* for curing eye-pains; cf. 7, 46, 1); *Epid.* II 5, 18, 2; 6, 6, 3; 6, 26, 2 (cf. *Iudic.* 56); II 6, 30, 2; 6, 31, 6; *Salubr.* 5, 22; *Aff.* 61, 8; *Nat. mul.* 32, 88; 94, 2 (cf. *Mul.* 89, 11–13 and 224, 15–16); *Mul.* 13, 20–21; 37, 30–34; 135, 1–6; 201, 32–34; 203, 22–25.

[88] Cf. also Athen. X 437 a–b. The anecdote ultimately stems from Chares, *FGrHist* 125 F 19b. For Alexander's hard drinking, see Plut. *Quaest. conv.* 623 d and 623 f–624 a. For the banquets of Alexander in Plutarch, see recently Gómez and Mestre (2010). For Macedonian 'court symposia' in general, see Sawada (2010) 393–399.

[89] See Arist. *Poet.* 1461 a 15. Cf. e.g. the aforementioned argument by the physician Mnesitheos, quoted in Athen. XI 483 f. Cf. also Plut. *Sept. sap. conv.* 156 a (a very conventional passage).

[90] In his letter *On Hard Drinking* (*ap.* Athen. XI 483 f–484 a). The term *kōthōnismos* stems from *kōthōn* (in later times a Laconian drinking vessel used by soldiers), appearing already in Archilochus, fr. 4 W^2, l. 6 and abundantly commented upon by Kritias in his *Constitution of the Lacedaemonians* (DK 88 B 34 = *FGrHist* 338A F 34, with a comm. *ad loc.* by W. S. Morison in *BNJ* 338A F 24). In general, cf. Catoni (2010) 252–53.

get intoxicated less easily' (διὰ τί ἧττον μεθύσκονται ταῖς μεγάλαις [*sc.* κύλιξι] κωθωνιζόμενοι;). Leaving aside the questionable reliability of this assumption, we ought to observe that the link between hard drinking (of diluted wine) and especially large cups appears very often in our archaic and classical sources. In Alkaios, fr. 346 L–P (esp. ll. 2 and 4–6), we find encouragement to start the symposion earlier than usual (i.e. before dark), but also to prepare larger cups, to mix a stronger blend of wine and to pour it out more abundantly into the cups.[91] In a similar vein, we find an unusually large cup used for hard drinking in both Plato (twice) and Xenophon's *Banquets*.[92] It seems clear that the crucial props for ritual hard drinking during the symposion are specialized cups, much larger than usual,[93] which, when lacking (or just for fun), can be replaced by a makeshift substitute, i.e. one of the bigger vessels at hand as in the case of the wine-cooler in Plato (*Symp.* 214 e).

From the iconography of archaic vase painting and actual archaeological finds, we know the shape of the abnormally large *kylikes* which must have been used, probably alongside ritual libations and/or special toasts,[94] to this effect. Their large diameter (and/or a shape totally unsuitable for drinking, such as that of Plato's *psyktēr*) must have made it extremely difficult to drink without inelegantly spilling wine, as R. Osborne observes (Osborne 2007, 36). One such *kylix* (shortly after 530 BC) is as large as 34.4 cm in diameter (see Figure 1.2). In addition, the cup has a very peculiar stand in the shape

[91] I shall return to this important fragment below, p. 86.

[92] Pl. *Symp.* 214 e (using a wine-cooler, or *psyktēr*; cf. Vierneisel 1990*a*) and 223 c (using a big *phialē*); Xen. *Symp.* 2, 23 (cf. Woldinga 1938, comm. *ad loc.*). In the same passage of Xenophon's *Banquet* (2, 23–27), we witness a dispute over how one should handle 'sport drinking' (cf. below). Philip suggests using a 'big *phialē*', whereas Socrates opts for the simultaneous use of numerous small cups, refilled as fast as possible (in general, cf. below, p. 87 n. 7 and p. 89 n. 13).

[93] Such as those sometimes considered too large by scholars to be useful at all in the symposion and suitable only for the hall's adornment (thus e.g. Murray 2009, 511).

[94] Cf. also Alexis, fr. 116 K–A, ll. 1–2. Cf. Menander, fr. 401 K–A (= 443 Koerte), where a 'new custom' (contemporaneous with the poet?) associates 'the large cup' with drinking unmixed wine. A parodistic image of this procedure comes from another fragment by Alexis, fr. 9 K–A (with comm. in Olson 2007, 307–308). Cf. also the famous 'cup of Alexander' (Plut. *Quaest. conv.* 623 f–624 a). See also next footnote.

[95] Ashmolean Museum: Oxford 1974.344 (= The Beazley Archive, no. 396); cf. Boardman (1976) and Yatromanolakis (2009). For similar vases featuring masculine sexual organs, see also Lissarrague (1987) 56–57; Isler-Kerényi (2007) 190–191, and recently Zhuravlyov (2012). A black-figured 'Chalcidian cup' by the Phineus



Figure 1.2 Red-figure *kylix* (*c.*520 BC; 34.4 cm in diameter), Oxford, Ashmolean Museum, 1974.344 (= The Beazley Archive, no. 396). Image © Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford

of male genitals, making its use even more difficult, since it must have been extremely difficult to put it aside safely when still full of wine.[95] The diner was thus obliged to drink it up instantly or quickly to share this cup with his neighbour. In the early-modern Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth a similar function was fulfilled be the 'crippled cup', *kuśtyk* or *kulawka*, a large container devoid of stand (see Figure 1.3). Thus, the game of hard drinking was not only a test of one's resistance to the power of alcohol but a simultaneous test of dexterity and elegance. For want of a better term, I would call this modality of sympotic wine consumption 'sport drinking' or, to use an ancient Greek term, *polyposia* ('drinking much').[96] In which case, we might

Painter is even bigger (*c.*530 BC; Würzburg L 164 = The Beazley Archive, no. 18504; 38 cm in diameter). In general, cf. also Catoni (2010) 251–258.

[96] The regular use of the term is confined to post-classical literature and the only strictly technical use of this word I know of might have applied to the ritual drinking-contest on the day of Choes during the Athenian Anthesteria (see Diog. Laert. IV 8, for the philosopher Xenocrates taking part in the contest of *polyposia* on the day of Choes; cf. Timaeus, *FGrHist* 566 F 158a, *ap.* Athen. X 437 b = Philodem. coll. VIII 17–IV 8 Dorandi, with a comm. *ad loc.*, p. 229–230; Ael. *VH* II, 41). However, for *polyposia* as a conceivable sympotic term, see perhaps already *Theogn.* 212 (οἶνόν . . . πίνειν πουλύν) and 509 (οἶνος πινόμενος πουλύς); Pl. *Symp.* 223 b (πίνειν πάμπολυν οἶνον). Cf. Plut. *Quaest. conv.* 624 a–d. Another candidate for a technical term for 'sport drinking', alongside the noun *kōthōnismos* (above, p. 41 with n. 90), is perhaps the verb *epikōthōnizesthai*. Pollux (VI 31) claims that this verb means τὸ περαιτέρω πίνειν, 'drinking beyond' (lit. 'further' in the sense of 'too far'?) in Kritias (= DK 88 B 59 = *FGrHist* 338A F 15).

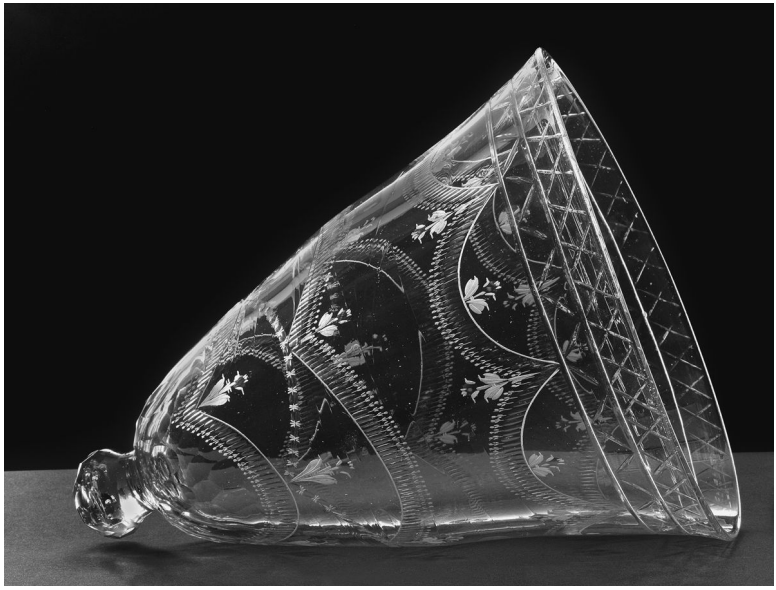


Figure 1.3 The Polish 'crippled cup', a huge bell-shaped glass *kulawka* (or *kuśtyk*), Wilanów Palace Museum, inv. Wil. 17 (*c.* AD 1800; H. 27.5 cm, 23.5 cm in diameter; capacity of *c.*3 litres). Photo by Z. Reszka. Courtesy of The Wilanów Palace Museum

envision such a contest agreed upon by all the diners present or suggested by a symposiarch, but there likewise might have been formal 'challenges' by a particular symposiast to his peers.[97]

In what is perhaps a more radical version of the aforementioned 'sport drinking', another modality of sympotic drinking games can be found among the technical terms for various types of drinking in Pollux. In a series including, among other things, terms such as 'Thracian toast' and 'Scythian toast' (both likely pertaining to drinking undiluted wine or hard drinking, as such), one also encounters the following sequence (VI 25): *ἀμυστὶ πίνειν*, *ἀμυστίζειν*, *χανδὸν πίνειν*,

[97] Cf. Lepreus challenging Heracles (in Matris' *Eulogy of Heracles*, *FGrHist* 39 F 1; *ap*. Athen. X 412 b) to a *polyposia*. In Plato's *Symp*. (213 e) Alcibiades parodistically 'elects himself' to the office of the symposiarch to impose hard drinking on the participants in the banquet (213 e). One of the diners, Eryximachos, calls this kind of drinking, without speaking or singing over wine, 'drinking in a simple way, as those who are thirsty' (214 b).

i.e. 'to drink without closing the mouth, to drink at one draught, to drink with mouth wide open'.[98] In Anacreon (fr. 11a Page [*PMG* 356] = 33 Gentili) and in the *Anacreontea* (9 West = 8 Bergk, l. 2), we still find the adverb *amysti* in a non-technical sense, and it is famously contrasted with 'drinking in the vein of the Scythians' in Anacreon.[99] However, in an erudite catalogue of the names of sympotic vessels in Athenaeus we come across a cup called the *amystis*, which 'is the name given to a sort of drinking which is to be accomplished without taking breath or closing the mouth' (XI 783 b; tr. Ch. B. Gulick). Athenaeus adds: 'They [i.e. the Ancients—M.W.] used to drink this "breathless" cup to the accompaniment of music, measured at a tempo that conduced to speed'. To this effect, Athenaeus quotes an intriguing fragment by the late-fifth-century comic poet Ameipsias (fr. 21 K—A = 22 Kock; *ap.* Athen. XI 783 e), in which a symposiast asks a flute-girl to play and requests that another person (perhaps one of his fellow diners) join her in song. He is going to 'drain a cup in the meantime' (ἐκπίομαι δ' ἐγὼ τέως). After that, the girl should play again, while another diner goes to 'take the "breathless" cup' (αὔλει σύ, καὶ σὺ τὴν ἄμυστιν λάμβανε). In the interim, the first diner most probably begins to sing as if accompanying the one who is drinking 'breathlessly'.[100]

The comic poet Antiphanes (fr. 75 K–A; *ap.* Athen. X 458 f) adds yet another complication to this sport, as the diner is supposed to drink 'at one draught' with both his hands behind his back. This is usually interpreted by scholars commenting on the fragment as 'meaning that someone else will hold the cup, to prevent the drinker from taking it away from his lips'.[101] While this is certainly possible, archaic and early classical vase painting actually provide

[98] Cf. *LSJ*[9] *s.vv.*

[99] In Anacreon, however, a technical undertone cannot be ruled out, since a large-capacity cup (*kelebē*) is mentioned. In Stesichoros (fr. 4 Page [*PMG* 181] = S19 *SLG* and Page–Davies) this manner of drinking is logically associated with drinking hard and applied to the arch-drunkard of Greek mythology, Heracles. Cf. Pütz (2007), 168. See also two *graffiti* from Olbia from the late sixth century BC (*IGDOP* 28a–b, with comm. *ad loc.* by L. Dubois, ibid. 70) and a *graffito* on a *kylix* from Ksanthos in Lycia (*CEG I* 465; *c.*470 BC).

[100] As often in the fragmentarily preserved comic verses, much depends on the attribution of these utterances to diverse characters of the play and on our interpretation of who might be the addressees of this series of exhortations.

[101] Thus Olson (2007), 134, *ad loc.* (i.e. no. C8, l. 13). Cf. Ch. B. Gulick's comm. *ad loc.* (in vol. V, p. 583, footnote *d*).



Figure 1.4 Red-figure *kylix* of the Adria Painter (*c.*480 BC), Adria, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, B471 (= The Beazley Archive, no. 203698). Drawing by F. Lissarrague. Courtesy of F. Lissarrague

analogous scenes, such as that on a red-figured cup of the Adria Painter (*c.*480 BC; see Figure 1.4),[102] where a young symposiast drinks his wine holding the cup by his teeth, with his hands and his legs stretched out. It would only be natural to assume that the youngster must drink the cup at one draught, or *amysti*. Furthermore, as F. Lissarrague demonstrates in his remarkable book, *Un flot d'images*, this gesture belongs to a series of images, prominently featuring human diners or mythical satyrs balancing or leaping on greased wineskins (*askoi*), which was yet another sympotic game.[103] Another red-figured cup of Epiktetos, of *c.*510 BC, shows an adult symposiast

[102] Adria, B 471: *ARV*^{2}, 349/2 ('naked youth trick-drinking') [= The Beazley Archive, no. 203698]; Lissarrague (1987) 74 with pl. 61. Incidentally, in our times, this manner of drinking has been referred to as 'the Aussie tradition of drinking beer with no hands' by George W. Bush, the former U.S. president, in his memoirs (*Decision Points*, New York, 2010, p. 25).

[103] See esp. Eubulus, fr. 7 K–A. Lissarrague (1987) esp. 66–75. In Plut. (*Quaest. conv.* 621 e–f), *askōliazein*, or 'hopping on one leg' (most probably on greased wineskins), is mentioned in the context of the ruthless sympotic game of 'ordinances', for which see below, p. 52 with n. 121. In general, cf. Latte (1957) 385–391 (a rather hypercritical treatment of the subject) and Immerwahr (1992) 130–132.

rather inelegantly sitting on the ground and (possibly) drinking directly from a wine jug (*oinochoē*) with his left hand stretched out and supporting a cup balancing on his arm.[104] This radical act of showing off with a display of one's sympotic competence represents perhaps the ultimate example of Greek 'sport drinking', although only the most skilled *virtuosi* were probably capable of this kind of demonstration.

If one were to look for a common denominator of the specialized sympotic drinking sports adduced thus far, the game of equilibrium would perhaps be the right answer. Generally speaking, drinking contests were not about who was capable of drinking the largest quantity of wine, but about testing one's resistance to alcohol, and perhaps paradoxically, promoting self-control as intoxication progressed well into the night.[105] Exactly the same can be said of perhaps the trickiest of all pastimes available to the symposiasts, namely the dancing performance with all its morally suspect professional and feminine associations. As the Athenian Hippokleides learned in an episode in Herodotus, to which I shall soon return in greater detail,[106] it was not enough to outdo other diners in skilful performances: most importantly, it took a self-controlled competitor, who was always able to observe all the unwritten laws of good sympotic behaviour, to gain general applause during a symposion.

On a metaphorical level, we may say that the same principle was also at play in the best-known sympotic entertainment—the *kottabos* game. In this activity, the precarious balance of the target (a bronze plate placed on a high pole or a small ceramic dish floating in a large vessel full of water) was bound to be destroyed by the symposiasts practicing their aim with shots of wine, who were judged in accordance with their ability not simply to hit the target but to do so in

[104] Oberlin (Ohio), 67.61: *Paralipomena*, 329/14bis (according to Beazley: 'naked man seated on the ground frontal, about to fill a cup balanced on his arm', but I think drinking from a cup previously filled using the *oinochoē* makes more sense) [= The Beazley Archive, no. 352425]; Lissarrague (1987) 74 with pl. 59. Cf. Catoni (2010) 267 pl. 29.

[105] Plato's view of the symposion is particularly interesting in this context: see *Laws*, 649 d–e, with Pellizer (1990) 183 and *passim*.

[106] See below, pp. 69–70.

[107] For the *kottabos* game in general, see esp. Athen. XI 479 c–e (cf. e.g. Athen. X 427 d; XI 487 d–e; XV 665 c–668 f; Pollux, VI 109–111). A detailed, if parodistic, description of the game is provided by Antiphanes, fr. 57 K–A (with a comm. *ad loc.* Olson 2007). From an immense secondary literature about the game, see esp. Boehm

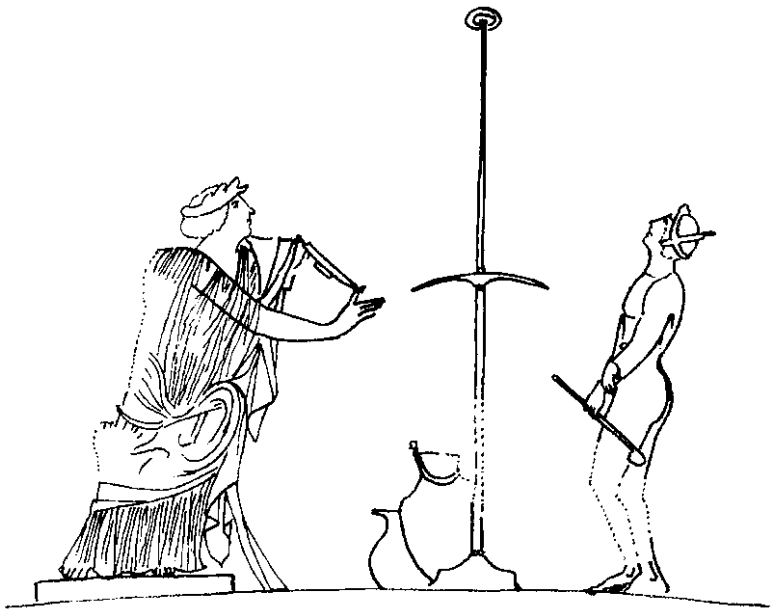


Figure 1.5 Red-figure *oinochoē* of the Phiale Painter (*c.*440 BC), Berlin, Antikensammlung, F2416 (= The Beazley Archive, no. 214279). Drawing by F. Lissarrague. Courtesy of F. Lissarrague

an elegant manner (see Figure 1.5; also Figure 1.1).[107] And as we shall shortly discover, almost all the intellectual pastimes practised at Greek symposia can be interpreted by means of such a 'game of equilibrium' principle.

I will be very brief on my next issue, partly because I can refer the reader to several excellent treatments of the subject,[108] and partly because I will return time and again to this set of problems in the course of this study, especially in the next chapter. Now, what is

(1893); Lafaye (1899); Schneider (1922); Sparkes (1960); Lissarrague (1987) 75–82; Hoesch (1990*c*); Jacquet-Rimassa (1995); Schäfer (1997) esp. 48–49. Cf. also below, p. 53 with n. 127 and p. 93.

[108] Most recently, see esp. Stehle (1997) 213–227; Ford (2002) 25–45; and Collins (2004) 63–163. Cf. also Reitzenstein (1893); Trumpf (1973); West (1974) 17–18; Rösler (1980); Vetta (1983*b*), (1992), (1996); Bowie (1986); Gentili (1984) esp. 89–104; Pellizer (1990) esp. 179–180; Hamdorf (1990); Siedentopf (1990); Tedeschi (1991*b*); Bartol (1993) 45–74; Latacz (1994); Slings (2000). Among the syntheses of Greek literature, an excellent introduction to sympotic poetry and its workings can be found in Rossi (1995) esp. 89–90 and 99–198.

particularly striking about the intellectual or cultural side of the symposion is the fact that little room was given therein to what Xenophon called *θεάματα καὶ ἀκροάματα*, or 'delights for eye and ear' (*Symp*. 2, 2; tr. A. J. Bowen), i.e. to the performances or displays provided by hired specialists from beyond the sympotic group (professional singers, virtuoso musicians, mimes and dancers, et al.). Allowing for the fragmentary state of our evidence and without forgetting the aristocratic, i.e. 'insider' and dilettante, virtuosi naturally appearing at earlier symposia,[109] one might be tempted to risk the hypothesis that the role of professional entertainers or performers grew progressively in the course of the history of the symposion, reaching its peak in the second half of the fifth and fourth centuries BC.[110] The archaic and classical symposion was all about dilettante performances by full members of the sympotic group. And to put things in a slightly banal manner, I think that this level of strenuous involvement and regular intellectual (not to mention physical) effort can hardly be deemed typical of pleasurable convivial relaxation by a high social élite in so-called 'traditional societies'.

Let me borrow a succinct summary of the 'active' intellectual pastimes of the symposion from A. Ford's book, *The Origins of Criticism* (Ford 2002, 32):

> Being able to join in the paean was doubtless no more demanding than participating in a grace before meals, but that first ritual only initiated a series of moments in which the guest's musical background would be on display. From this point of view, the heart of the evening was the guests' singing for each other. . . . Depending on their abilities, participants performed songs passing back and forth, there were toasts in verse (which invited responses in kind), and various singing games. As songs circulated, it was common to 'take up' another guest's verse

[109] It is enough to think here of, say, Terpander, Alkaios, or Xenophanes.

[110] In a similar vein, see already Rossi (1983). It is worthwhile to observe that Xenophon's *Banquet* is perhaps the only extant piece of sympotic literature and metasympotic reflexion of the later classical period to openly pronounce on this professionalization in a favourable way (in general, cf. Jones 1991, esp. 190–192 and Andrisano 2003). Aristophanes, Plato and so many others see it as a sign of degeneration as compared to the good old times of the symposion, or as typical of the symposia of the uneducated and the vulgar. See e.g. Pl. *Prt*. 347 c–e, with Tecuşan (1990) 257–260 (cf. *Symp*. 176 e, where the flute-girl is simply dismissed from the cultured gathering about to follow). In general, for the symposion in Plato's thought, see above, p. 27 n. 26.

'smartly' (*dexiōs* or *kalōs*), continuing or extemporizing on it, or simply switching to another song.

Poetic performances by individual symposiasts, as well as their utterances in prose, could serve diverse practical functions during a symposion, forming a part of various sympotic games and entertainments. Lengthy or extremely short, sung or recited, memorized beforehand or improvised on the spot—the common denominator of these utterances was that they all belonged to pairs, or to a longer series, of witty verbal exchanges between members of the sympotic group. Even a virtuoso performance by a great lyric poet present at a symposion, or the re-enactment of such a poem by a next-generation symposiast, was not a self-contained artistic event, but a response and an invitation for another utterance by fellow diners. A whole variety of sympotic themes applied here, from a metasympotic love-and-wine discourse, political scheming, gossiping, even moralizing and philosophical debate, but all this was an interactive situation that ideally required the constant attention and full involvement of diners alert to the actual course of the symposion.

Let me mention just a few of the various games or amusements that provide the framework for different intellectual performances by the symposiasts. Naturally, toasts (*proposeis*) come first,[111] also called 'addresses' (*prosagoreuseis*),[112] or 'cups of friendship' or the 'loving-cup' (ἡ φιλοτησία [*sc.* κύλιξ]),[113] honouring a particular diner but also challenging him to respond. In fact, mockeries or jibes (*skōmmata*) were characteristic elements of the symposion and often represent the dangerous face of the symposion for ancient and modern writers alike. For while they were in principle regulated by some basic rules

[111] See, e.g., Hipponax, fr. 14 W^2; Kritias, fr. 6 W^2, l. 3–4; Kritias, fr. 8 G–P, l. 7–8; Philoxenos of Leucas, *PMG* 836(c) (with a comm. in Athen. XI 486 a–b); *Carm. conv.* 34(b) Page [*PMG* 917] (P. Berol. 270). Cf. Plut. *Sept. sap. conv.* 155 e; 156 e; Athen. 426 a (with the authors adduced there) and 427 a; and sch *Pind. Ol.* VII 4: προπίνειν. Cf., for *ekpinein*, Anacreon, fr. 88 Page [*PMG* 433] (= 103 Gentili). In general, cf. Macurdy (1932) and esp. Vössing (2004) 33–36.

[112] See Plut. *Quaest. conv.* 617 a. Cf. Athen. XI 498 d.

[113] See, e.g., *Theogn.* 489; Ar. *Ach.* 983; Ar. *Lys.* 203; Alexis, fr. 293 (cf. also his fr. 59 and 116) K–A; Theopompos Comicus, fr. 33 K–A, l. 8–10; Dem. XIX [*de falsa leg.*] 128; Athen. X 432 d and esp. 502 b; cf. Pollux, VI 30 and Harpocr. *s.v.* φιλοτησία (p. 301,12 Dindorf).

of cultured behaviour, such challenges could easily degenerate into verbal abuse (*loidorēma*) and, through other acts of hubris, lead to physical violence.[114] In this way, the competitive atmosphere among the increasingly intoxicated and excited males could find its natural outlet in deriding and offending fellow diners.[115] However, such more or less formal mockeries also contributed to the playful atmosphere of the venue (*ta geloia*), thus adding to the pleasure of drinking together, in contrast to the more serious themes and activities of the symposion (*ta spoudaia*).

While witty repartee was a particularly admired sympotic skill,[116] diverse riddles, conundrums, and 'questions' (*griphoi*, *ainigmata*, *zētēmata*) made up the favourite pastimes of the diners.[117] Likewise, there were literary sports consisting in finding an appropriate quotation from classical poets, or finishing a verse begun by another symposiast, as well as other erudite games using the traditional stock of Greek poetry.[118] Perhaps the most demanding sympotic sport of this kind was the game of 'capping' a poem from a predecessor's performance.[119] As we shall see in the next chapter,[120] the arch-

[114] See, e.g., Alexis, fr. 160 K–A (for this fragment, cf. above, p. 30); *Adesp. eleg.* 27 W^2, l. 5–6; cf. Aeschylus, fr. 179–180 Radt; Xen. *Symp.* 4, 28; 6, 1; Plut. *Quaest. conv.* 613 f; 631 c–634 f; cf. as well Philoxenos of Leucas, *PMG* 836(e), l. 24; and also perhaps *Fragmenta adespota*, 119 Page [*PMG* 1037], ll. 15–16 (cf. Dain 1933, 66–73 [no. 60]). See also Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, IV 1128 a 30 and below, 4.3.4, on the entertainments of the Odyssean Suitors. In general, see esp. Slater (1990) 214–216 (cf. already Slater 1981) and Collins (2004) 69–83.

[115] This is what happens to Philokleon in Aristophanes' *Wasps* (Ar. *Vesp.* 1311–1321, cf. esp. ll. 1319–1320). In his beautiful and highly illuminating paper, Rossi (1983) 47–48, was wrong, I think, to regard such attacks against one's fellow-diners as exceptional. In general, cf. Pellizer (1983).

[116] See esp. a series of anecdotes about a certain Stratonikos in Athen. VIII 348 d–352 d. Cf. below, pp. 69–70, on Hippokleides in Herodotus' Book VI.

[117] Cf., e.g., Antiphanes, fr. 75 K–A (with Athen. 448 b–c); Pollux, VI 107–108. For a parodistic and very obscene riddle of the kind suitable for drunken symposia, see Eubulus, fr. 106 K–A, ll. 1–9 (with a comm. in Olson 2007, 221–222). In Athenaeus, a lengthy development devoted among other things to the riddles, runs from X 456 c up to 459 b. In general, cf. Stehle (1997) 221–222; Collins (2004) 127–134; and Pütz (2007) 192–212, as well as Fraenkel (1950) comm. on A. *Ag.* ll. 899–902 and Ford (1999). On 'teasing by the provision of incomplete information' in sympotic poetry, see recently Bowie (2013). Cf. also a very peculiar game in Plut. *Sept. sap. conv.* 152 F–153 d.

[118] See, e.g., Plut. *Quaest. conv.* 736 d–737 c; Athen. 457 e–458 f (for this passage, see below, p. 52).

[119] In general, cf. Reitzenstein (1893) 24–28, Collins (2004) ix–xi and 'General Index', *s.v.* 'capping'.

[120] See below, pp. 94–96.

sympotic game of *skolion* (properly speaking) belonged to the same category of sophisticated sympotic pastimes.

Lastly, let me mention a less well-known sympotic ploy, which could develop into an intellectual, poetic, drinking or dexterity contest, depending on the atmosphere of the event in question. I am thinking here of the game of 'commands' or 'ordinances' (*prostagmata*), alongside the *skōmmata,* a particularly risky pastime given its potential to degenerate into an offensive or even humiliating game for those targeted by a particularly witty 'order'. For instance, seeing a bald person among the symposiasts, one could order that everyone in turn comb his hair.[121]

To conclude, I would stress that all the sympotic games or entertainments had two things in common. On the one hand, they featured particular tasks (physical or intellectual) that naturally became more and more difficult as drinking progressed. On the other hand, such games required increasing prudence and self-control from the performing diner as well as from the 'moderator' (the symposiarch or the diner who gives 'orders' at that moment). By this measure, the symposion was a massive test of mental and physical equilibrium, especially as far as the more and more intoxicated diners were concerned. At any rate, purposeful obscurity, paradox, and provocation were natural vehicles for the diverse intellectual pastimes available to the symposiasts.

Now, virtually all kinds of sympotic activity were organized as contests (*agōnes*)[122] with prizes for victory (*athla*, *nikētēria*) and penalties (*zēmiai*) for those defeated. Thus, we hear of prizes in singing contests,[123] contests of *logoi*, 'riddles' (*griphoi*),[124] diverse

[121] See Plut. *Quaest. conv.* 621 e–622 a (in 622 a, Plutarch envisages 'pleasurable and profitable' contests of this kind, too); but cf. perhaps Plato, *Symp.* 214 c. I would also be tempted to interpret in this manner the 'cups of precepts' (*κύπελλα θεσμῶν*) in *Anacreontea* 2 West.

[122] Two interesting folk songs (*carm. popularia*, 17 Page [*PMG* 863] and 19 Page [*PMG* 865]) may well have been originally performed in a sympotic context.

[123] See, e.g., *Theognidea*, ll. 993–996. To interpret this elegy in the context of a nocturnal symposion it is indispensable to read—with M. L. West's edition (W^2) and with Van Groningen (1966) *ad loc.*—*ἐφίμερον* [*sc. ὕμνον*] instead of *ἐφήμερον* in l. 993. Unlike modern editors of the Theognidean Corpus, but with Athen. VII 310 b, who quotes this poem, I would dissociate this elegy from the ensuing lines 997–1002.

[124] See, e.g., Athen. 448 b–c and 457 c–f. Cf. Collins (2004) 'General Index', *s.v.* 'riddles'. Cf. Pütz (2007) 208–210.

erudite games including that of quoting appropriate verses from renowned poets (Athen. X 457 e–f). Likewise, there were probably competitions of *skōmmata*,[125] dancing and drinking,[126] and the game of *kottabos*.[127] The ultimate sympotic competition is, of course, surviving the drunken night wide awake until the dawn, so there were also special prizes for the 'winner' of the entire symposion,[128] namely for the diner who survived, as Callimachus puts it, 'till the crow' (*μέχρι τῆς κορώνης*).[129] Otherwise, decisions regarding the winners of given contests were made by general applause, with diners shouting or even clapping their hands.[130] Recognition was also given to fellow-feasters who possessed specialized skills or knowledge that were

[125] Thus, perhaps, in *Anacreontea* 47 West (= 45 Bergk), ll. 6–7: the verb *μάχεσθαι* here may allude not to a drinking contest, but to jesting.

[126] Prizes in dancing competitions: e.g. Plut. *Quaest. conv.* 747 a–b; cf. Eubulus, fr. 2 K–A; or the prizes in all-night feminine dancing contests (on which see Bravo 1997), which might have been modelled on sympotic customs. Prizes in the *polyposia* contests (*kōthōnismos*): Plut. *Sept. sap. conv.* 155 a–156 a; Athen. X 437 f–438 a; but most of all *Theognidea*, ll. 971–972 ('What *aretē* is there in drinking and winning a drinking-contest prize [*ἐπιοίνιον ἆθλον*]? Often an *agathos* loses it to a *kakos*'), joking on the theme of athletic 'excellence' with all its moral overtones. Cf. a neat paradox in *Theogn.* 491–492. On 'sport drinking' in general, see above, pp. 41–44.

[127] For such prizes (called *κοτταβεῖα* or *κοττάβεια*), see Athen. 479 d (quoting Hegesander of Delphi, fr. 32 *FHG* IV, p. 419); 666 c–e; cf. Pollux, VI 111 as well as *Etymologicum Magnum*, *s.v.* *κοτταβίζω* (533, 21). In general, see Pütz (2007) 183–184. In time, the '*kottabos* prize' was most probably generalized as an award given to the victors of all the sympotic competitions (thus Bravo 1997, 114 with n. 27). For *kottabos* prizes in general, cf. briefly Olson 2007, comm. *ad* H 13, ll. 2–3. Cf. also Csapo and Miller (1991) 379–381.

[128] See sch Ar. *Eq.* 277, where we hear of the sympotic 'contests of sleeplessness' (*εἰώθασι γὰρ ἐν τοῖς συμποσίοις ἁμιλλᾶσθαι περὶ ἀγρυπνίας*), wherein whoever stays wide awake until dawn is given the prize (*ἆθλα τοῖς διαγρυπνηταῖς*). On the winners of the entire symposion, see also Pollux, VI 108. In Plato's *Banquet* (223 c–d) Socrates emerges as the winner of the whole banquet.

[129] Fr. 227 Pfeiffer, ll. 5–7 (*ap.* Athen. XV 668 c), with comm. *ad loc.* by Bravo (1997) 115–116. Bravo argues that this proverb alludes to the birds pecking up the leftovers of the party next morning (on the proverbial crow see also Poseidippos, epigram 121 Austin–Bastianini ll. 1–2).

[130] See, e.g., Ar. *Vesp.* 1314; Pl. *Symp.* 198 a; Xen. *Symp.* 9, 4 (with Woldinga 1938, *ad loc.*). Cf. Plut. *Sept. sap. conv.* 179 c.

[131] This may prompt an association with judicial procedure, as in Plato (*Symp.* 175 e), where the diners' judge (*dikastēs*) will be Dionysus. For specialized judges of a dancing contest, see Plut. *Quaest. conv.* 747 a–b; this procedure was parodied as early as in Xenophon (*Symp.* 2, 9).

[132] See Plut. *Quaest. conv.* 747 a; cf. Pollux, VI 108 and 111. Drinking (and eating) contests organized by kings or *poleis* would naturally include money as their prizes; see, e.g., Athen. X 115 e.

required in a particular discipline.[131] The prizes of sympotic competitions included different kinds of sweets,[132] 'eggs, cakes, and nibbles (*tragēmata*)' (Athen. 667 d), alongside more practical objects such as a pair of boots or a cup[133] and finally kisses (*philēmata*).[134] We hear of some unspecified 'penalties', such as those in the sympotic contest of 'commands' in Plutarch (*Quaest. conv.* I 621 f–622 a), but it is clear that at times those defeated in a competition were supposed to drink an additional cup of neat wine or wine diluted with seawater.[135] Such is the case of the 'penalty drink' in the game of riddles as alluded to in a fragment of Antiphanes's *Ganymede*. In addition to drinking a cup of brine, the person unable to solve the riddle is supposed to drink it in one draught and with both his hands behind his back.[136] It is worth noting that this punishment in fact combines two regular drinking games (see above) and turns them into a rather unpleasant experience by adding salt water to the drink. According to Plato Comicus (paraphrased but not quoted to this effect in Athen. XV 666 d), diners who missed their target in the *kottabos* game were stripped of their clothes (*ἐξίσταντο καὶ τῶν σκευαρίων οἱ δυσκυβοῦντες*).[137]

All in all, it seems that the most important aspect of such awards is their erotic overtones.[138] Kisses as sympotic awards clearly dominate the picture and undressing as a means of paying one's forfeit, most

[133] Cf. Plato Comicus, fr. 46 K–A (= 612 Kock), ll. 8–9.

[134] This is how we should understand, I think, 'the beautiful boy standing in our midst as a prize' (*ἆθλον δ' ἐν μέσσῳ παῖς καλὸν ἄνθος ἔχων*) in *Theognidea*, ll. 993–996. See also Xen. *Symp.* 5, 9 and 6, 1 (with Woldinga 1938, *ad locc.*); Callimachus, *Pannychis*, fr. 227 Pfeiffer, ll. 6–7 (for which cf. above, with n. 129), as well as the previous note. Cf. Athen. X 457 d (kisses as prizes in the game of 'riddles'); as well as Athen. XI 487 d (quoting Sophocles's *Salmoneus*, fr. 537 Radt = 250 Nauck[2]) and XV 666 d–e (quoting Plato Comicus, fr. 46 K–A = 612 Kock; see previous note), for kisses as prizes in the *kottabos* game.

[135] Cf., e.g., Athen. X 457 c–e and Pollux, VI 107.

[136] Antiphanes, fr. 75 K–A, ll. 13–14; cf. comm. *ad loc.* in Olson 2007, 133–134. On this custom, see also above, pp. 45–46.

[137] True, the term *skeuaria* is ambiguous (*LSJ*[9] *s.v.* *σκευάριον*): 'small vessel or utensil' or 'implements of gaming', but here it can only refer to 'paltry garment', since the diners did not have any additional equipment at hand. Cf., perhaps, Athen. VI 245 f, where the parasite Chaerephon for some reason 'stood up half-naked at a dinner party' (tr. D. Olson).

[138] In this context, one might wonder whether the parodistic 'beauty competition' (*ἀγὼν περὶ τοῦ κάλλους*) between Kritoboulos and Socrates in Xenophon's *Symposion* (5, 1–9) does not allude to some (purely hypothetical, as far as I am aware, but cf. Pellizer 1990, 181) beauty pageants among the *neoi* (or perhaps among the *hetairai*) present at a symposion. In any case, this particular contest is decided in a secret ballot and the prize is 'not ribbons but kisses as garlands' (5, 9, tr. A. J. Bowen).

probably both for male and female drinkers, follows the same logic. As is well known, the very core of the *kottabos* game was its doubly erotic meaning. Firstly, it was de rigueur to dedicate the act of tossing wine in the *kottabos* game to a (male or female, and sometimes only would-be) lover; secondly, the winner of the game was supposed to use the victory to satisfy (most probably only symbolically though) his erotic appetites.[139] The fact that all types of sympotic discourse were strongly laden with erotic themes and undertones hardly merits repeating.[140]

Another aspect of the symposion at work here is the 'strong principle of competition'. The fact that every pastime of the diners is subject to rivalry should attract our particular attention. In short, the light-hearted but merciless rivalry of peers and eroticism are what drives the sympotic entertainment. I would suggest that there is something in common between the ubiquitous principle of competition (cf. prizes and fines in almost every sympotic activity) and the ritualized acts of humiliation of individual banqueters (e.g. the *skōmmata* and the game of 'ordinances'). Both aspects of the symposion clearly point to its function in formalizing and channelling underlying tensions between the fellow-drinkers. With this in mind, it is time to take a look at the mutual relationships of aristocrats drinking together.

1.3 SYMPOSION AND ARISTOCRACY: SOCIAL REALITIES AND GROUP-IDEALS

1.3.1 Sympotic Inequalities in Action

In this section, I would like to briefly reassess the social and political functions of the aristocratic banquet within the conceptual framework of archaic Greek society as proposed by B. Bravo. Note, however, that Bravo essentially takes the Theognidean Corpus, my important source in this section, as an amalgam of diverse poems originating from particular convivial occasions in the course of the archaic period. However, I assume that some poems of the Corpus

[139] For the erotic aspect of the *kottabos* game, see e.g. Csapo and Miller (1993) esp. 379–381.

[140] In general, cf. Pellizer (1990) 180–182.

should not only be attributed to Theognis, but that they stem from the original project of this poet (namely ll. 19–68). I also suppose that some 'occasional' poems in the collection as a whole only pretend to refer to a particular convivial situation. They are in fact conventional and convey a universal message applicable to all conceivable occasions of the kind. This is why they appealed to consecutive generations of archaic and classical Greek aristocrats.[141]

It should also be noted that although one may expect 'patron-role feasts', i.e. generous banquets held by a host in order to obtain political support from his actual or potential clients, to play an important societal role in the archaic period, my focus in this book is exclusively on symposia, i.e. the banquets attended solely by the members of the (precarious) group of *aristoi*.

In the introductory and programmatic elegy of Theognis, we read the following admonition addressed to the poet's pan-Hellenic public (cf. ll. 22–24) but conventionally disguised as a piece of wisdom offered by an *erastēs*, or older lover, to his young boyfriend, an *eromenos* (ll. 31–34): '. . . never associate yourself with the bad men (*κακοῖσι . . . ἀνδράσιν*), but always stick to the good (*agathoi*); drink and eat side by side with them and sit with them (*καὶ παρὰ τοῖσιν πῖνε καὶ ἔσθιε, καὶ μετὰ τοῖσιν ἵζε*) and please them, whose power is great' (*καὶ ἄνδανε τοῖς, ὧν μεγάλη δύναμις*).[142] Given the young age of (the flesh-and-blood or imaginary) Kyrnos, it is understandable why he is supposed to sit instead of reclining.[143] Meanwhile, it is not just his age

[141] Let me say here that I find it difficult to follow the radical redating of Theognis' life by West (1974) 65–71 (with the poet allegedly being active from no later than the third decade of the seventh century BC). For the traditional dates see, recently, Lane Fox (2000) 37–40 (*c.*600–*c.*560 BC). I, for one, would date him closer to the end of this period, more or less a generation after Solon. For a recent attempt at reconstructing the earliest, fifth-century phase of the history of the Theognidean Collection, see Bowie (2012).

[142] Note, however, that Felix Jacoby argued that the distich 33–34 was not genuine (Jacoby 1961 [1931], 347).

[143] See above, p. 34.

[144] The same group is characterized by Solon, fr. 5 W^2 (= fr. 7 G–P), l. 3, as 'those who have power (*dynamis*) and are admirable because of their riches' (*χρήμασιν . . . ἀγητοί*). I cannot agree with Bravo (1989) 57, that in our Theognidean passage all the aristocrats are identified with 'those who have great power'; if so, what we have is a totally idealized vision of this social group. It is more plausible, I think, that the poet ponders here one of the central questions of his aristocratic ideal, namely who are the true *agathoi*. In Theognis's ideal, 'the noble ones' are those who can claim their noble pedigree, but at the same time are morally noble and politically 'good'. Only such men are suitable companions for Kyrnos and the poet's role is to make it possible for

but, in the first place, his inferior social position that should make him 'gratify' the *agathoi*.[144] There can be no doubt that real life symposia gathered together *agathoi* of very diverse social standing, asymmetrical political influence, and unequal economic strength.

As we are told in the *Corpus Theognideum* (ll. 173–178), poverty (*peniē*) subdues an *agathos* more than anything else, so that it is better to throw oneself into the sea than suffer penury. 'Indeed, a man broken by poverty can neither say nor do anything; his tongue is tied' (l. 177–178: . . . *γλῶσσα δέ οἱ δέδεται*). This enigmatic passage becomes clear thanks to a famous poem of the *Corpus* (ll. 667–682) also attributed to Euenos (as fr. 8b W^2): 'Had I had wealth, Simonides, I would not feel uneasy as I do now [or: 'the wealth . . . I used to have'—M.W.] in the company of *agathoi*' (ll. 667–668). What follows is very difficult syntactically, but the sense has been securely established by B. Bravo as an allusion to the sympotic competition wherein diners were supposed to participate one after another in a poetic exchange on a given subject (or respond one after another to a riddle).[145] The narrator of this poem complains that he must skip his turn in the game and remain 'speechless for want' (ll. 669–670: *ἄφωνος χρημοσύνῃ*), although he knows the right answer to the riddle better than anyone else. A similar image recurs in the *Corpus* in the lines 419–420: 'Although I do know many things, [my turn in the game—M.W.] passes me over; but I keep silent of necessity (*ὑπ' ἀνάγκης σιγῶ*), well aware of my [present] power [*dynamis*, *sc.* my currently diminished social importance—M.W.]'.[146]

Such passages, as Bravo puts it, testify to the ambiguous position of the impoverished *agathoi* (Bravo 1989, 66). But one should not forget that the fictitious diner who speaks in lines 667–682 only says that he

Kyrnos to recognize such men. In general, this ideal must have been related to the growing gap between pedigree, material means, and social position of many *agathoi* (cf., famously, ll. 39–52 and ll. 53–68). This problem was a crucial issue for other archaic wisdom-poets, too (cf., e.g., Solon, fr. 15 W^2 = fr. 6 G–P). It is important to stress that in this respect Theognis is far from the simple-minded conservatism of some anti-nouveau riche ideology: for him, the 'good old aristocrats' can in fact be only false *aristoi* if they lack moral values (cf. e.g. ll. 39–40). On the opposition between the *agathoi* (*esthloi*) and the *kakoi* (*deiloi*) in Theognis see Cerri (1968).

[145] Bravo (1989) 64–66. For such contests see above, p. 51.

[146] Ironic undertones of the word *dynamis* here were well perceived by Van Groningen (1966) 167 (*dynamis* actually meaning *adynamiē* here). Cf., perhaps, *Theognidea*, ll. 815–816. I take this distich as a proverbial excuse to skip one's turn in the game of sympotic riddles.

must skip his turn to stress the importance of what he is about to say. Thus, passages such as *Theogn*. 419–420 unambiguously show that despite their reduced economic status, impoverished aristocrats are supposed to take part in verbal exchanges on an equal footing with the wealthier aristocrats.[147]

In all the cases cited above, the expression 'to keep silent' should not be taken literally, but understood as depicting the uncomfortable condition of those who in the future may cease to be invited to the symposia by their peers. In other words, I regard it as highly unlikely that economically diminished ex-aristocrats remained for very long within the group that regularly dined together. Unlike Bravo,[148] I would take poems of the Theognidean Corpus, referring to pauperized or destitute banqueters, as conventional images with a moralistic intent to emphasize the precariousness of the human condition and the vicissitudes of fortune. Such mementos would serve as a pungent counterpoint to the luxurious and relaxed atmosphere of the banquet, warning the diners against the dangers of hubris. A striking sympotic admonition appears in the *Corpus*, ll. 155–158 ('In anger, never reproach a man with heartbreaking poverty nor with wretched want'), culminating in a conventional gnome that forms a variation on a Hesiodic theme from his wisdom-poem *Works and Days* (717–718).[149] We find similar motifs in several other passages of the *Theognidea*. The distich 1115–1116, mentioning poverty as being stigmatized by a wealthy fellow diner, in the same breath seems to emphasize that this penury is only relative and will not last forever.[150]

Perhaps the most elaborate poem of this kind is the one we find in lines 825–830 of the *Theognidea*. I also think that it is the most informative text concerning the relationship between luxurious symposia and impoverished *aristoi*. It is therefore worth citing this difficult text at some length, as ingeniously interpreted by

[147] Although it was possible to skip one's turn (see below, 92 with n. 27 as well as the previous note), it was not well received and the practices of the symposion gave each participant equal access to all sympotic pastimes (see below, 2.3.2).

[148] Cf. Bravo (1989) esp. 63–64 and Bravo (1990) esp. 44–45. See, however, my general remarks above, pp. 55–56, on the conventional character of many sympotic poems.

[149] Cf. also a difficult and enigmatic poem in the *Corpus Theognideum* ll. 511–522, whose incipit echoes *Odyssey* XVI 23 and whose vivid imagery plays with the motifs of friendship, poverty, and dangerous sea travels.

[150] No less conventional are the lines 1129–1132, mentioning the 'heartbreaking poverty' and slandering by one's enemies as unworthy concerns during a symposion, when it is customary to complain about old age and youth irretrievably lost.

Bravo (Bravo 1990, 42–50): 'How can your hearts endure singing to the pipes? Look! One can see from the *agorē* the mortgage-stone (*ouros* = Attic *horos*) of the land that feeds with its fruits those who, during banquets (ἐν εἰλαπίναις), carry purple wreaths around their blond hair! Come, Skythes, shave your hair off, stop the revel (ἀπόπαυε δὲ κῶμον) and mourn the sweet-smelling land you're about to lose'. Bravo understands this poem as an address to a flesh-and-blood aristocrat, Skythes, now hosting his friends. In fact, this formal reproach would be full of praise for the true aristocratic virtue that makes Skythes endure his dire adversities and defy public opinion by organizing the sumptuous symposion currently attended by the poetic persona of this poem. As such, this poem would testify to the fact that badly impoverished *agathoi* did attend symposia, although their position therein must have been ambiguous at best.

Drawing on Bravo's exegesis, my own interpretation differs in key respects. At the outset, I would simply like to place additional stress on some highly conventional aspects of the poem. In the first place, given the topographical realities of a Greek *polis*, the vivid image of the mortgage-stone seen from the *agorē* should not be taken literally. For the poet, what is important in these lines is their dramatic effect. Secondly, in this poem we find a literary contrivance not unlike those often found in archaic and early classical vase painting, namely 'synoptic convention'. Accordingly, different stages of the symposion are merged into one synchronous image to produce a strong literary effect (here: the collective song to the *aulos* performed during a symposion is joined with the *kōmos* after the banquet). Thirdly, the

[151] Traditional interpretations of the name *Skythēs* in this poem (see e.g. Van Groningen 1966, *ad loc.* and Ferrari 2000, 210–211) need to be discarded. Skythes is neither a Scythian slave, nor can his name ironically refer to the proverbially 'Scythian way of drinking' of one of the diners. Incidentally, in Clearchus, fr. 45 Wehrli (*ap.* Athen. XII 524 e–f) the Scythians in grief lose (i.e. shave off) their hair in connection with the loss of their prosperous lifestyle. I owe this point to Jerzy Danielewicz.

[152] The name *Skythēs* given to citizens or even members of local élites can be found fairly often in Ionia at the end of the classical period (four times in the second half of the fourth century: *LGPN* VA, *s.v.*). Slightly earlier (first half of the fourth century BC), it appears in Heraclea in Bithynia (*LGPN* VA, *s.v.*). In the late fifth and early fourth century we encounter the name *Skythēs* in Laconia (a Spartiate Skythas: Xen. *HG* III 4,20; Plut. *Ages.* 16,3, as Skythes) and in Kamarina on Sicily (*LGPN* IIIA, *s.v. Skythas*). At the end of the fifth century a certain Skythes was an official (one of the *probouloi*) of the group called Aeinautai in Eretria (Guarducci 1995 [1967], vol. I, 222–224 ['Eubea 2.'], with pl. 84). Earlier still is the Athenian evidence for the name *Skythēs*:

rare name of the host *Skythēs*,[151] although securely attested in our prosopographical material,[152] may actually be conventional. In the sympotic imagery of Attic vase painting, we often find characters in exotic Scythian clothes or headgear (see Figure 1.1), which must have been yet another prop for the aristocratic extravagance.[153] If so, the tension between the telling name and the actual poverty of the host would produce additional dramatic effect.[154] Understood as conventional rather than spontaneous, this poem fits with the sympotic wisdom tradition of parading the precariousness of human condition and vicissitudes of fortune.

If, however, Bravo is right in his *hic et nunc* interpretation, I would still draw a different final conclusion. What gives the poem its force is not the courage but the quasi-suicidal bravado of Skythes. For him, this may have been one symposion too many. If he is unable to pay his debt, the host will lose his social position and will not attend, let alone host, luxurious symposia in future. Once again, I think the effect of the poem would be weakened, if not spoiled, had it been normal for penniless (or actually former) *agathoi* to be present at aristocratic banquets.

Either way, I assume that such poetic images as those noted above would reflect the fears and concerns of the sympotic group, rather than its actual social composition—thus responding to the likely widespread sense of the economic precariousness of the archaic aristocracy. In the *Theognidea* ll. 920–922 (tr. J. M. Edmonds), we find an exemplary aristocrat who 'wasted his substance' (*chrēmata*) to 'please his belly', i.e. to dine spectacularly, most probably with his fellow-diners. Then he proudly laughs it off with an enigmatic

as many as three in the second half and at the end of the sixth century; two more at the end of the fifth and in the fourth century (*LGPN* II, *s.v.*). One of them, at the turn of the sixth century, can be found on an inscription of the '*kalos* type' on a *kyathos* of the Philon Painter (*ABV* 516; Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, 04.22 = The Beazley Archive, no. 330660). Another Athenian Skythes was a painter active *c.*520–505 BC (*ARV*^{2} 82–85; cf. also *ABV* 352).

[153] In general, cf. Lissarrague (1990*c*) esp. 125–149; cf. also De Vries (1973); Hoesch (1990*d*); Miller (1991).

[154] Besides, such rare and exotic-looking (at least in the eyes of the sixth-century public) names were, for some reason, already well-established in Greek wisdom-poetry: just think of the Hesiodic Perses or of Kyrnos in Theognis.

[155] In his edition (W^2) M. L. West suggests a fifth-century date for this poem. If so, the poet clearly follows earlier conventions of the archaic period.

(sympotic?) proverb 'I have had my fling' (*ὑπάγω φρένα τέρψας*) and goes begging among his former friends.[155]

The heightened sense of social precariousness amongst Greek aristocrats during a symposion is already apparent in the seventh century BC. In a famous consolatory elegy of Archilochus (fr. 13 W^2, perhaps preserved in its entirety), quoted by Stobaeus (IV 56,30), we find a certain Pericles, fellow-diner and friend of the poetic persona of the poem. Athenaeus (I 7f–8b) read another poem in iambic tetrameters, of which little survived. He was nonetheless capable of reading enough to testify that 'Archilochus, the poet of Paros, speaks of Pericles as bursting into drinking parties uninvited' (*. . . ὡς ἀκλήτου ἐπεισπαίοντος εἰς τὰ συμπόσια*; tr. D. E. Gerber). The fragment Athenaeus quotes at this point runs as follows (124 b W^2): 'Although you consumed a large quantity of unmixed wine (*χαλίκρητον μέθυ*), you did not contribute to the cost (*οὔτε τῖμον εἰσενείκας . . .* [a lacuna follows—M.W.] nor again did you come invited (*klētheis*) as though a friend (*philos*), but your belly led astray your mind and wits to shamelessness (*anaideiē*) . . .'.

I consider it rather unlikely that Archilochus referred in his poems to two different but homonymous Pericleses.[156] It is more likely that in both poems we encounter one and the same (real or imaginary) character. Given the fact that in fr. 124b W^2, the narrator speaks on behalf of a larger group of fellow-drinkers, we should assume that Pericles's economic standing and social status changed dramatically and his position in his intimate circle changed accordingly. No longer a 'friend' (*philos*), he still comes to the symposia to drink and eat. But the very decision to come uninvited is regarded as 'shamelessness' by his former friends. And this demonstrates precisely the sort of humiliations he must swallow in his new capacity. I think that the expression *οὐδὲ μὲν κληθείς* (lit. 'not as one who is invited') is used here in the sense close to the later technical meaning of the term

[156] Cf. Aelius Aristides (*or.* 46, vol. II 380, 21 Dindorf), who also opts for just one Pericles known to Archilochus. The identity of Pericles from several fragments of Archilochus is also accepted by Catoni (2010) 46, cf. 35–36. The name Pericles appears also in fr. 16 W^2 (but Stobaeus does not attribute this poem explicitly do Archilochus, or to anyone else) and in fr. 28 W^2, l. 4 (P. Oxy. 2310 fr. 3)—in a passage restored by W. Peek. With the two last testimonies, we would gain additional confirmation of the importance of Pericles in Archilochus's circle of friends. The contrast with fr. 124b W^2 would thus become even more pronounced.

aklētos, namely to depict a character coming to a banquet for a free meal and for drink and paying in return the price of humiliation as a 'buffoon' (*gelōtopoios*).[157] Incidentally, the iambic convention of Archilochus' poem is very appropriate in such a context.[158]

The reason why Pericles ceases to be invited is simple. As Archilochus puts it, he is no longer welcomed among his former 'friends' since he is no longer able to 'contribute with his share' (fr. 124b, l. 2: οὔτε τἰμον [= τιμὴν] ἐἰσενείκας). This is why the *aklētoi* (or 'laughter-makers') are also technically called *asymboloi*, 'the ones without contribution [*sc.* to the feast]'.[159] Clearly, the bottom line for the aristocratic group of *philoi* is the ability to contribute on an equal footing and to reciprocate with feasts and symposia.

We may surmise that only when they eventually became too poor to invite their *hetairoi* back to dine with them at their own expense, and/or became permanently unable to keep up the luxurious lifestyle of the *agathoi*, such impoverished aristocrats found themselves rejected by high society. Of course, a certain number of one's *philoi* would at times teeter on the brink of 'ugly poverty', but as long as they were in, they were in. It must have been vital for the sympotic atmosphere that both sides kept up appearances as long as it was reasonably practicable. Hence the aforementioned appeals not to reproach one's friends with poverty during a symposion. In the *Theognidea*, ll. 511–522,[160] we come across a melancholy image of an aristocrat who is still able to host one or two friends, but is no

[157] Cf. above, pp. 34–35. The earliest unambiguous evidence for the presence at feasts of the *aklētoi*-parasites, who are expected to amuse the feasters by some self-humiliating performances, comes from the *Odyssey* (see in general Fehr 1990, esp. 185–187; cf. below, p. 227). In the sixth-century poet Asios (fr. 14 W^2), we find a hungry *aklētos* resembling a slave and crashing into a wedding party. The amusing pseudo-techical term *knisokolax* that appears in this poem seems to point to the topical nature of such a literary character as early as this period. Cf. also a parasite's speech in Epicharmus (fr. 32 K–A) at the end of the sixth century (with comm. *ad loc* in Olson 2007, 55–58).

[158] The whole argument might have been just a humorous reprimand, exaggerating the current social position of Pericles. Even as a joke, though, the poem refers the audience to the notion of *aklētoi* recruiting from among impoverished aristocrats.

[159] Cf., e.g., Eubulus, fr. 72 K–A (Olson 2007, no. G14, with further references in comm. *al loc.*); Alexis, fr. 259 K–A (Olson's no. G15, with comm. *al loc.*); Diphilus, fr. 74 K–A, l. 8; Anaxandrides, fr. 10 K–A (*ap.* Athen. XIV 614c); Pollux, VI 12. For *symbolai* as a sympotic ideal and principle, see below, pp. 67–68.

[160] Cf. comm. *ad loc.* in West (1974) 156, justifying the need to change the sequence of lines in his edition (W^2).

longer capable of entertaining a larger number of potential guests (l. 522: *ξείνια δὲ πλέονεσσ' οὐ δυνατὸς παρέχειν*), i.e. to organize symposia.

Still a proud aristocrat, his economic collapse has already opened the gates to his fall within the social hierarchy. If he remains unlucky but still yearns for his inbred sympotic lifestyle, all he can do is to hope one day to attend symposia as an *aklētos*—no longer invited, but tolerated as a shameless party-crasher for the sake of the good old days. When present, he would probably have limited access to the sympotic entertainment and would no longer participate on an equal footing with the rest. I think it is such men who would be obliged to 'skip their turn' in diverse pastimes involving wine, in the manner suggested by the two elegies of the *Theognidea* quoted above. The déclassé aristocrats are simply no longer considered *esthloi,* and so they can no longer be *hetairoi* entitled to share the symposion with their peers. All they can do is drink and eat at someone else's expense, thus enjoying only an ersatz version of their previous convivial privileges.

* * *

While impoverished aristocrats form an important element of the worldview of Theognis and of other poets of the Theognidean Corpus, it has rightly been observed that archaic poetry lacks straightforward references to the presence of nouveau riche citizens, newly acknowledged *agathoi*, at aristocratic symposia. We often find complaints about them in the *Theognidea* but they are never depicted as present among the diners. This is entirely understandable, since mentioning their fresh social advancement would spoil the atmosphere and the etiquette of such aristocratic occasions.[161] However, I certainly believe that there is enough indirect evidence to attest to their presence.

This is especially visible in the well-thought-out arrangement of material in the original part of Theognis's work. In the programmatic section of the *Theognidea* that has already been discussed, Kyrnos is encouraged to seek the company of the *aristoi* and avoid that of the *kakoi* (ll. 31–38). This is a recurrent theme, applied throughout the Theognidean Corpus to such daily concerns as marriage (cf., famously, ll. 183–192), loyal friendship (as for instance in ll. 61–68 and 113–114), a long-range trade expedition (ll. 1165–1166), and risky political activity (e.g. ll. 69–72 and perhaps ll. 75–76). Here we

[161] Thus Bravo (1989) 66.

are in a clearly sympotic setting. Kyrnos is coaxed by the poetic persona of the *Theognidea* into 'drinking and eating' as well as 'sitting' in the company of the *agathoi* (ll. 33–34), while being dissuaded from doing the same thing with the *kakoi* (ll. 31 and 35–36).

Opening the Theognidean Collection, two lengthy elegies seem to substantiate the programmatic statements of the poet as they deal with different aspects of the question around which the poem revolves: who are the true *agathoi* with whom one should consort?[162] The first elegy (ll. 39–52) brilliantly presents the following problem: some (the majority?) of those who call themselves *agathoi*, the leaders of the community (*hēgemones*), do not deserve to be regarded as such, for they succumb to their evil hubris and would destroy the city for the sake of private gain; in fact, they are *kakoi* (esp. ll. 39–46).[163] What they are unable to do—as we learn from Solon's fr. 4, 9–10 W^2, the likely literary model for this elegy—is to 'know how to avoid excess' (*koros*) and how to 'serve in peace the festivities of their present feast' (*. . . οὐδὲ παρούσας εὐφροσύνας κοσμεῖν δαιτὸς ἐν ἡσυχίῃ*). Of course, these false *agathoi* should be categorically avoided at banquets of 'the worthy'.

In the next and quasi-symmetrical elegy of the *Theognidea* (ll. 53–68), we encounter the opposite problem. This time Kyrnos is counselled to mark the difference between the true, although currently impoverished, *esthloi* and the true *kakoi*, although promoted to the ranks of those considered *agathoi*. The latter deceive one another even when exchanging smiles; they do not know true friendship. The poet does not need to state it explicitly, but it is clear from the preceding programmatic elegy (ll. 31–38) that these are the men Kyrnos must not consort with at symposia. In addition, the spiteful hint at their alleged way of life (ll. 54–56: 'in the past they were not aware either of *dikai* nor of *nomoi*, but wore out goatskins on their bodies and grazed outside this city like stags') is far from innocent. The false *agathoi*, or the nouveau riche, lack not only the sense of loyalty and friendship necessary to become trusted companions, but also etiquette and social graces, especially with respect to their innate dress-code and their table manners. As a result, they do not fit in with the sophisticated lifestyle incarnated in the aristocratic symposia. This widely

[162] Cf. above, p. 56 n. 144.

[163] I will develop this interpretation elsewhere. In a somewhat similar vein see Irwin (2005) 226–230.

exaggerated image is undoubtedly a joke, drawing on the Odyssean picture of the lifestyle of the Cyclopes,[164] and it must have been extremely amusing to the urbane company of diners listening to this elegy.[165]

What is important to note is that both groups, the inbred aristocrats who are morally *kakoi* and the nouveau riche falsely passing for *agathoi*, cannot easily be recognized as true *deiloi*. It takes subtle wisdom-poetry to teach Kyrnos how to identify and to avoid them. I think that this is as far as Theognis could go, in suggesting that young aristocrats such as Kyrnos will meet unworthy and uncouth individuals time and again at élite banquets, without violating aristocratic decorum.

1.3.2 Sympotic Dreams of Equality

There is a peculiar set of sympotic values and ideals corresponding to the social realities of the symposion, but also to the fears and concerns of the sympotic group analysed above. In a beautiful sympotic poem for Alexander son of Amyntas of Macedon, Bacchylides (fr. 20B Snell–Maehler, ll. 10–16) praises the symposion itself.[166] It is there that wine and hopes for love elevate human aspirations (*merimnai*): 'Soon, a diner destroys city-walls and thinks of himself as a king of all men; houses shine of gold and ivory and wheat-bearing ships bring great wealth from Egypt. This is how a drinker's heart is agitated'. As if responding to this poem (or the other way around), Pindar (fr. 124a–b Snell–Maehler, ll. 5–8) makes the poetic *persona* of his *enkomion* send Thrasybulus a 'chariot of lovely songs' during a symposion, 'when the wearisome anxieties (*merimnai*) of men leave their hearts'. '. . . [W]hen we all on an equal footing sail across a golden sea to a sea-coast populated by fantasies. Then, a poor man is rich, whereas for a wealthy one . . .' [a *lacuna* follows—M.W.]. 'The

[164] *Od.* IX 112–115, with a comm. *ad loc.* in *Odyssey II*, p. 20–21, and some remarks by Vidal-Naquet (1986) esp. 21–22.

[165] The alleged former dress of yet another parvenu, Artemon, contrasted with his current extravagance in this respect, is the thing to be mentioned at the very outset of Anacreon's fr. 43 Page (*PMG* 388 = 82 Gentili), ll. 1–5.

[166] See comm. *ad loc.* in Danielewicz (1999) 382–384, with the bibliography adduced there; cf. Maehler (2004) *ad loc.* and Stehle (1997) 219–220. More on this fragment below, p. 86.

hearts (*phrenes*) of those tamed by the bow of vine wax' (l. 11). In the conventional *Anacreontea* (48 West = 46 Bergk[4], ll. 1–6), we find a direct echo confirming that such images and ideas belonged to the traditional stock of sympotic themes (tr. J. M. Edmonds): 'At Bacchus' entering | Cares (*merimnai*) go to bed; | I'm rich as Sardis' king (δοκῶ δ' ἔχειν τὰ Κροίσου), | Rare songs would sing, | With ivy crown my head; | In thought I put | The whole world underfoot (πατῶ δ' ἅπαντα θυμῷ) . . .'. A brilliant passage from Aristophanes' *Knights* (ll. 92–94), reflecting the state of minds of the fifth-century Athenian élites is quoted by Athenaeus (XI 782 c–d) alongside Pindar's enkomion: 'For you can see that when men drink they are wealthy, successful, they win in lawsuits, prosper, they are of assistance to their friends' (πλουτοῦσι, διαπράττουσι, νικῶσιν δίκας, | εὐδαιμονοῦσιν, ὠφελοῦσι τοὺς φίλους).[167]

The fragments of Pindar and of Bacchylides suggest that social and economic differences between the participants in a given symposion might have been quite large.[168] But Pindar's formulation is actually more interesting: all the diners navigate across the sea of delusion 'together and on an equal footing (πάντες ἴσᾳ)'.[169] That is to say that the dreamlike atmosphere of the symposion momentarily suppresses all economic and social differences among its participants. Their heads swell with proximity (if only fleeting) to wealthy grandees, tyrants, or Oriental kings.

The same goal of concealing or smoothing over real inequalities between the drinking *hetairoi* is achieved on a more elementary level by stressing the reciprocal and contributive character of the symposion. As we have already seen in the case of impoverished aristocrats in archaic poetry, one cannot participate in a sympotic group without

[167] A neat priamel in one of the convivial *Adespota* (70 [988] *PMG* = 138 Bergk) looks like a subtle dismissal of such sympotic dreams of wealth. Solon's fr. 24 W^2 (= 18 G–P = *Theognidea*, ll. 719–728) may be another sober *variatio* on this theme. Of course, the notion that wine 'lifts human spirits' is a banal commonplace in sympotic literature (cf., e.g., Ion of Chios, fr. 5 Page [*PMG* 744]; Diphilos, fr. 86 K–A; cf. also the authorities quoted by Plutarch, *Quaest. conv.* 715a), but the theme of wealth and the imaginary economic equality of the feasters is a peculiar and very meaningful development. Incidentally, for a successful symposion, the mood of the fellow-drinkers should in principle be the same (*Theogn.* 1217–1218; cf. 1041–1042). I owe this point to Krystyna Bartol.

[168] Both are commented on by Bravo (1989) 75–76.

[169] For the sea in sympotic imagery, see Slater (1976) and Lissarrague (1987) esp. 104–118. Cf. recently Corner (2010).

being able to host one's fellows in a comparable manner. Contributing to a feast or banquet held in the house of a friend (or on neutral ground, in a rented banquet hall)[170] must have been equally important. There is symbolic reciprocity involved as well: following the same logic, the 'uninvited' and despised guests are called 'the non-contributing ones' (*asymboloi*). In Athenaeus VIII 365 d, we learn of the expression '[*sc.* drinking] ἀπὸ συμβολῶν' and of a widespread Greek custom of bringing *symbolai*, i.e. material or symbolic contributions, also known as 'parts' (*merides*), to the symposion.[171] This is exactly what Archilochus's Pericles could no longer do, thus losing his position among his former fellow-drinkers.

What is important is that the '*symbolai* principle' operates also on a purely metaphorical level. In Plato's *Symposion* (177c), young Phaedrus defends his idea of organizing a sympotic contest of speeches praising Eros. He says that this way (i.e. giving his speech in due time) he is eager to 'put his share' (ἔρανον εἰσενεγκεῖν) into the party. In Xenophon's *Symposion*, the 'laughter-maker', Philip, as an *aklētos,* can only contribute to the party with his, rather crude, jokes. But as the other guests remain serious, he pretends to mourn and unveils his head only when he finally hears laughter. For he now knows that 'there will be *symbolai*' (1, 16) to which he can contribute. Already in his first appearance in the dialogue (1, 11), he plays on the motif of the sympotic *symbolai* when he knocks at Kallias's door and proudly announces that he comes 'fully equipped . . . with everything necessary to dine . . . at someone else's expense' (πάντα τὰ ἐπιτήδεια ὥστε δειπνεῖν τἀλλότρια), adding that his slave is 'under great pressure . . . from having nothing to carry' (tr. A. J. Bowen). The implication is that a properly invited and well-behaved guest was obviously supposed to come with a servant carrying a basket with his master's contribution to the party. Apollodoros of Karystos (fr. 29 K–A; *ap.* Athen. VI 243 d) shows another parasite sneaking into a wedding-party as an *aklētos* equipped with a garland and a basket. In Athenaeus VIII 365 a–c, we find the expression 'basket-parties' (ἀπὸ

[170] See above, pp. 30–31; cf. also below, pp. 169–175.

[171] Athenaeus (VIII 365 d) quotes here the comic poet Alexis (fr. 147 K–A), amusingly referring to a Chalcidian custom of bringing perfume flasks and ribbons as *symbolai* (although this may be just a malicious hint at the stinginess of the Chalcidians), and also the historian Hegesander (fr. 13, in *FHG* IV, 419) adducing relevant Argive terms for *symbolē* and *meris*.



Figure 1.6 Red-figure *kylix* of the Brygos Painter (*c.*480 BC), Florence, Museo Archeologico Etrusco, 3949 (= The Beazley Archive, no. 203988). Drawing by F. Lissarrague. Courtesy of F. Lissarrague

σπυρίδος δεῖπνα), with a reference to Pherekrates (fr. 57 K–A). And indeed, in late archaic vase painting, we often encounter such symbolically-laden baskets.[172] Of course, not all symposia were reciprocal banquets involving a contribution by each diner,[173] but it would be

[172] See e.g. *ARV*^{2} 119/1576 (= The Beazley Archive, no. 201002; akin to Elpinikos Painter, last quarter of the sixth century BC: Florence, Museo Archeologico Etrusco 4221 [tondo]); *ARV*^{2} 427/2 (= The Beazley Archive, no. 205046; Duris, *c.*500 BC: Vatican, Museo Gregoriano Etrusco, 16561); *ARV*^{2} 467/118 (= The Beazley Archive, no. 204800; Macron, signed by the potter Hieron, *c.*500 BC: New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art 20.246); non-attributed *kylix* from the National Museum in Athens 1357 (= The Beazley Archive, no. 9534; *c.*500 BC); *ARV*^{2} 402/12 [1651] (= The Beazley Archive, no. 204353; Foundry Painter, *c.*490–480 BC: Cambridge, The Fitzwilliam Museum 103.18); *ARV*^{2} 376/90 (= The Beazley Archive, no. 203988 [tondo]; Brygos Painter, *c.*480 BC: Florence, Museo Archeologico Etrusco 3949; see Figure 1.6), and esp. *ARV*^{2} 432/58 (= The Beazley Archive, no. 205103; Duris, *c.*490–480 BC: Florence, Museo Archeologico Etrusco V48). Cf. also a meaningful combination of two symbols of prestige: a basket and a stick, on a red-figured *kylix*, *ARV*^{2} 378/120 (*Paralipomena*, 366 = The Beazley Archive, no. 204018; Brygos Painter, early fifth century: Oxford, Ashmolean Museum 1966.484).

[173] The *Banquets* of Plato and Xenophon were organized at the expense of their respective hosts and the very term 'basket-parties' suggests a specific occasion. Athen. 365 b–c adduces other terms for this type of banquet: *synagōgimon* and *synagōgion* (quoting Alexis, fr. 253 K–A, Ephippos, fr. 4 K–A, and Menander, fr. 123 K–A). The term *eranos* could have a similar meaning (cf. above, p. 27 n. 26).

correct to say that *symbolai* play a crucial role in the way Greeks imagined a good banquet.

The ideal of an equal contribution and share shouldered by all the participants was central to the archaic and classical symposion. This can be seen in its technical language as well as in the consistent imagery of the sympotic space. As Jean-Pierre Vernant observed fifty years ago, the equality of citizens required that the power was put or placed geometrically 'in the middle' (*ἐς μέσον–ἐν μέσῳ*) of the city in the Greek political imagery of the archaic and classical periods.[174] In a similar vein, in the *Theognidea* 495–496 (the lines concluding a lengthy poem ascribed also to Euenos as fr. 8a W^2) it is stressed that the 'not unpleasant symposion' requires, in order to avoid mutual strife (*eris*), that the diners, addressing one or all of their fellow-drinkers (i.e. in their toasts and in their *logoi* as well), should speak 'in their midst' (*εἰς τὸ μέσον φωνεῦντες ὁμῶς ἑνὶ καὶ συνάπασιν*).[175]

At this point, let me turn to the well-known episode of the wedding of Agariste in Herodotus (VI 126–130).[176] Unsurprisingly, the historian was not particularly interested in Greek drinking customs as such. In the *Histories*, Greek or Greek-like banquets come to the fore only when something more than drinking and merrymaking is at stake, as in the case of the bloody banquet served to Persian envoys at the Macedonian court (V 18–21). In Book Six, Kleisthenes, the tyrant of Sikyon, invites a group of young suitors to decide on the marriage of his daughter in the course of a climactic symposion after a year-long testing of the candidates. During this decisive banquet, 'the wooers held a musical-poetical contest and a contest of speeches in

[174] See, above all, a famous passage of Herodotus (III 142,3 *ad fin.*). Cf. Vernant (1962) 121–125 (cf. also p. 95) and Detienne (1965) 425–441. In general, cf. Lévêque & Vidal-Naquet (1973) *passim*.

[175] In Philoxenos of Leucas (*PMG* 836(e), l. 23), we read of drinking, of *kottabos*-shots and of the *logoi* made 'in common' (*ἐπὶ κοινᾶς*). Cf. also S. *Ph*. 608–609 and esp. Eur. *Tr*. 54–55. This spatial image recurs several times in an elaborate rhetorical form in Plutarch. What is emphasized here is the centrality of the wine *krater* (*Table Talks*, I 615 a–b). In *The Symposion of the Seven Wise Men* (156 d), it is not wine, we are told, but the *logos* that is 'set in the midst before all' by the Muses as 'a *krater* of sobriety' (*αἱ Μοῦσαι καθάπερ κρατῆρα νηφάλιον ἐν μέσῳ προθέμεναι τὸν λόγον*), which is of course paradoxical. In *Table Talk* III 646 a (tr. P. A. Clement), Plutarch's friend and teacher Ammonios puts forward a provocative topic 'into our midst for an exercise in discussion' (*γυμνασίας ἕνεκα καὶ ζητήσεως καταβέβληκεν ἐν μέσῳ τὸν λόγον*).

[176] I epitomize here my forthcoming paper 'Wine and the Tyrant: The Wedding of Agariste and the Ideal of Sympotic Equality' (see Wecowski 2005 as well).

their midst' (129,2: ἔριν εἶχον ἀμφί τε μουσικῇ καὶ τῷ λεγομένῳ ἐς τὸ μέσον). Hippokleides of Athens wins the contests but then continues to dance in such an indecent manner that the tyrant announces that the Athenian 'has danced his marriage away', giving his daughter to the second best. There follows a memorable reply by the youngster: 'Hippokleides doesn't care!' With this, it becomes clear that the exchange actually forms an *agōn* of witty sympotic repartees.[177]

It is true that Hippokleides proved to be a hubristic diner. But, in the logic of Herodotus's story, the symposion is problematic in the first place because the powerful tyrant, who singlehandedly decided on the winner of the contest, dominated it. He was the father of the girl to be given in marriage, so it was natural for him to decide. Hence the paradox, given that such activity was the direct opposite of what was appropriate to a symposion, where it was de rigueur for all the drinkers to announce, or simply applaud, the victor.[178] By this measure, the *raison d'être* of this story in Herodotus is that this is a hubristic banquet and a tyrannical one at that. In a word: an anti-symposion. From my present perspective, it is important to emphasize that if my interpretation of this episode holds, we must assume, for the story to be understandable by Herodotus's contemporaries, that the ideal of sympotic equality (i.e. a rigorously equal sharing and accessibility to sympotic pleasures), which is never explicitly stated but only indirectly present in the extant corpus of archaic sympotic poetry, was self-evident well before Athenaeus, Plutarch, and Plato.

Bruno Snell observed long ago that in Alkaios and Sappho the word συμπόσιον belongs to a very peculiar group of συν- compounds that tend to express the cohesion of the community.[179] The same ideal is conveyed by the nouns modelled on the word *symposion*, such as *syndeipnon* ('common meal') and by the terms referring to the symposion by way of analogy, such as *synagōgimon* or *synagōgion* or by the already mentioned term *synousia*, lit. 'being together'. The term *symbolai* belonged to the same set of associations and was linked with a crucial aspect of the Greek convivial ideal.[180] The iconography of archaic vase painting incarnates this very ideal. As Pauline Schmitt

[177] Cf. above, p. 51 with n. 116. [178] See above, p. 53.

[179] See e.g. Alkaios, fr. 368 L–P, l. 2; fr. 70 L–P, l. 3; 306A (b) Voigt, l. 27; 401 (b) L–P [401 Voigt]; and Sappho, fr. 213 A (d) L–P, ll. 4–5; fr. 44 L–P, l. 5. Cf. Snell (1965) 71–72 with n. 24. In general, cf. Rösler (1980) 33–36 and Trumpf (1973).

[180] Athenaeus quotes the authors who used the terms *syndeipnon* (VIII 365 b), *synagōgimon*, and *synagōgion* (365 c). On *synousia* in Plato, see above, 27 n. 26.

Pantel famously suggested, based on a series of Corinthian, Laconian, Boeotian, and Attic vases pre-dating 500 BC, the painters tried to express the notion of the rigorous equality of the diners focusing, among other things, on the equal distribution of food and wine.[181] All in all, improper activities during a symposion include, for instance, excessive talkativeness,[182] but it is also bad when two diners continuously drink to each other, thus forgetting about the rest of the company,[183] for this means exercising undue control over the party and thus destroying sympotic equality.

In yet another passage in Plutarch (*Sept. sap. conv.* 154 c), one of the characters claims that sympotic 'conversation should be apportioned, just like wine, evenly to all as in a democratic constitution, and not according to wealth or honours, but common to all'. In Plato's *Banquet*, Socrates complains that he and Agathon, reclining as they do on the 'last' couch,[184] are not in a position to compete on an equal footing with so many excellent speakers who will give their speeches before them (177 e). His protest is of course only a joke, but it would make no sense whatsoever without the existence of a widespread ideal of sympotic equality among his fellow-diners (and Plato's public) which enabled them to appreciate it. In the more serious context of Plato's *Laws* (II 671 c), the indecent and hubristic behaviour of a symposiast consists in refusing to obey 'the order and one's turn to keep silent and to speak, to drink and to sing' (. . . *τάξιν καὶ τὸ κατὰ μέρος σιγῆς καὶ λόγου καὶ πόσεως καὶ μούσης κτλ.*).

Plutarch's *Table Talk* provide the reader with a series of variations on this theme. The most conspicuous include an idiosyncratically Plutarchian definition of the symposion. Let me quote it: 'for the drinking-party is a passing of time over wine which, guided by gracious behaviour, ends in friendship' (*Quaest. conv.* I 621 c, tr. P. A. Clement). Such a gathering can be called a 'friendly symposion'

[181] Schmitt Pantel (1990*a*) esp. 18–19. In general, cf. Lissarrague & Schmitt Pantel (1988).

[182] Cf. *Theognidea*, ll. 295–298.

[183] Thus, perhaps, in Hipponax, fr. 14 W^2. In his *Table Talk* (I 617 a), Plutarch radically observes that sympotic toasts and addresses as such (*προπόσεις καὶ προσαγορεύσεις*) may be viewed as something bad since using them 'we are doing honour not just to anyone nor carelessly, but as carefully as possible [. . .], putting order in highest honour' (tr. P. A. Clement). And in this manner, we are no longer in the realm of the sympotic equality.

[184] Cf. above, p. 36 with n. 64 and 65.

(*συμπόσιον φιλικόν*), in which one should 'cherish equality (*isotēs*) among men' (I 616 e). It is equality that 'fellowship (*koinōnia*) at [the] table needs most' (II 643 f) and the notion of *koinōnia* is central to the sympotic imagery in Plutarch.[185] In such a *koinōnia* of fellow-drinkers, unsurprisingly, wine and discourse are common to all (I 614 e); Plutarch even enumerates the necessary elements of this 'fellowship', namely 'general conversation' (*κοινὸς λόγος*), a flute-girl and a harp-girl and, of course, a wine *krater* 'set in the middle' (II 643 b).

It is noteworthy that some of those utterances are put in the mouths of diverse characters in the *Table Talk,* who argue against the ideal of a more hierarchical conviviality at home in the Greco-Roman imperial banquet.[186] When prolifically elaborating on classical sympotic themes and Plato in particular, Plutarch is well aware of the conflict he raises between the sympotic ideals of old and the societal and convivial values of his own time.

One aspect of Plutarch's vision requires particular attention. Here is his description of the beginning of the symposion: 'Indeed, when the great bowl is placed in our midst (*ἐν μέσῳ*) and the crowns are distributed which the god gives as token of our freedom, etc.' (*Quaest. conv.* I 615 a–b; tr. P. A. Clement). The connection between the god and 'sympotic freedom' is clear. Dionysus is 'the Looser and the Liberator of all things (*Λύσιός ἐστι καὶ Λυαῖος*)', who 'unbridles the tongue and grants the utmost freedom of speech' (613 c). Consequently, wine 'is the most fertile seed of frankness (*parrhēsia*) and thereby of truthfulness (*alētheia*)' (VII 715 f, tr. E. L. Minar). Sympotic truthfulness is a very well documented and studied motif,[187] but for Plutarch something more specific is at issue. During the symposion, the 'utmost *parrhēsia*' can be the most important thing if 'mixed with conversation and activities over wine in jesting' (VII 707 f). Hence we find another beautiful definition of the symposion: 'a sharing of earnest and jests, or words and deeds' (*Quaest. conv.* VII, 708 d, tr. E. L. Minar). The ideal symposion therefore depends on the equilibrium between seriousness and funny jests (i.e. *skōmmata*),

[185] See, e.g., I 615 a; VII 697 c; 707 c (a neat definition of the symposion as a cheerful *koinōnia* of libations, of a table, and of the conversation over wine).

[186] Cf. esp. I 615 d–617 a, confronting the egalitarian and the hierarchical arrangement of guests at a banquet, a dispute between Plutarch's father and brother, happily, although rather unconvincingly, resolved by Plutarch himself.

[187] See esp. Rösler (1995).

but Plutarch is well aware that this is difficult to achieve and one needs a good symposiarch to preside over the talks, performances and jests that foster friendship through gracious behaviour (I 621 c). Here again, Plutarch looks faithful to the time-honoured sympotic ideals.[188]

The programmatic anonymous poem from the Berlin papyrus 13270 (*Adespota elegiaca* 27 W^2),[189] a late classical sympotic elegy following the best traditions of this genre, epitomizes the sympotic ideal corresponding to the reality of the archaic and classical aristocratic banquet: 'Hail my fellow drinkers [and age-mates]|...| Every time we come together as friends on business such as this, | in laughing and playing (*γελᾶν παίζειν*) we should exercise *aretē*: | we should enjoy each other's company joking with each other | and jesting at each other just as much as one can bear without taking offence (*καὶ σκώπτειν τοιαῦθ' οἷα γέλωτα φέρειν*). | Then, let us turn to seriousness (*spoudē*): let us listen to those who speak | in turns (*ἐν μέρει*). For this is the virtue (*aretē*) of the symposion. | But let us obey the symposiarch (*τοῦ δὲ ποταρχοῦντος πειθώμεθα*) [at all times], for this is appropriate | for good men and brings good fame'.

* * *

What we witness in Plutarch, and in the anonymous elegy just quoted, is an embrace of the tension between diverse pleasurable pastimes promoting the self-indulgence of individual diners, on the one hand, and the communal ethos of a pleasurable gathering for all, on the other—between individual and communal 'liberation' or Dionysian 'freedom'. As previous scholars have rightly sensed, the symposion is actually characterized by the precarious equilibrium between proper and improper behaviour, in which each of the diners is always in danger of hubris, once he goes too far beyond the *συμποτικοὶ νόμοι* (repeatedly stated by poets and moralists)[190] in his attempts to surpass

[188] To some extent, he might be following here a passage of Plato's *Laws* II 671 d–e.

[189] Among the recent interpretations of this poem, see esp. Bravo (1997) 43–99 and Ford (2002) 33–34, with bibliography.

[190] It is enough to mention Xenophanes, fr. B 1 W^2 (with comm. in Lesher 1992, 10–12 and 47–54; cf. Herter 1956; Defradas 1962; Marcovich 1978; cf. also Bielohlawek 1940 and Seng 1988), a long elegy of the Corpus Theognideum, ll. 467–496; *Theogn.* 761–764 (cf. Ion of Chios, fr. 26 W^2 = 1 G–P and Solon, fr. 4 W^2, w. 9–10), Panyassis, frr. 16, 17 and 19 Bernabé (= 12, 13, 14 Kinkel); *adespota elegiaca* 27 W^2 = 12 G–P, as well as Eubulus, fr. 92 K–A (= 94 Kock) (cf. Panyassis, fr. 17 Bernabé). In general, cf. Pellizer (1990).

his peers. The tension at issue is intrinsic to the symposion as such and can be considered at a more abstract conceptual level.

Holding a symposion was a potential act of hybris. Not only in the sense of individual hubris that might arise during this highly competitive environment when exercising one's 'sympotic freedom'. More importantly, the diners are constantly in danger of collective hubris. The relaxed atmosphere created by intoxication, eroticism, and cultural delights is entirely devoted to pleasures which, to the utmost, involve neither commitment nor consequences, precisely due to the detached and isolated setting of this social event. The risk of hubris arose from the combination of the sympotic equality that replaced real-life inequalities with ad hoc hierarchies founded on momentary rivalries of a purely cultural kind with no direct repercussions on the everyday life of the symposiasts; and of diverse pleasures, including a highly eroticized atmosphere that carried no consequences, given the status of the potential sexual objects during a symposion—young boys and courtesans. In all this, the diners remove themselves from the natural limitations of the human condition, where joy is always mixed with misfortune and all human actions have ultimate consequences—as taught by practically all the Greek poets of the archaic period. This is the ultimate hubris of the symposion, since it is fair to say that the absolute goal of this peculiar type of banquet is to make its participants think of themselves as something close to the carefree Olympians. And this accounts not only for the obsessively moralizing sympotic discourse but also for the unusual intensity of apotropaic rites and gestures during the symposion. At the same time, this is the ultimate appeal of the symposion for those who consider themselves better, or *the best*, amongst their fellow citizens.

1.4 CONCLUSIONS: THE NATURE AND SOCIAL FUNCTIONS OF THE ARISTOCRATIC BANQUET

1.4.1 Symposion and the Natural Selection of the Archaic Aristocracy

The social realities of this aristocratic occasion, taken in conjunction with the ideals and fears it raised in the imaginations and lives of participants, force us reassess the societal functions of the symposion.

At the outset, it should be emphasized that numerous groups of *philoi* and potential fellow-feasters coexisted and their composition was fluid and unstable in every known Greek political community of the archaic period. The social function of the symposion therefore refers to both the social role of each group of participants and the cumulative effect of such activities in the communities where they were held.

Scholars have often stressed several of these social functions, including that of socializing aristocratic youth into the élite ethos and into practical skills needed in public life, providing a conveniently isolated setting for backdoor policy making and political scheming in a city, as well as offering a platform for the establishment and upkeep of international élite connections (political, familial, etc.). Perhaps most conspicuously, recent scholarship has tended to put emphasis on the ostentation of the detached and leisured status of aristocratic circles in the face of the 'commoners' of archaic and classical Greek societies.

Recently, Adam Rabinowitz interpreted the symposion interestingly 'as a mediating force between individual desires and the collective good of an elite peer-group' (Rabinowitz 2004, 185). In this chapter, I have also focused on the internal dynamics of the sympotic group, but I cannot agree with the contention that one of the primary functions of the symposion was mediating actual and violent conflicts between fellow-banqueters. In accordance with Bravo's theory of the archaic Greek society, I instead observe substantial differences in the societal status and wealth between different members of a given sympotic group. There were, however, generally acknowledged boundaries between them and 'the worthless'—boundaries determined by a person's material ability to afford the aristocratic life-style, among other things, to reciprocate and contribute to the luxurious symposia.

In practice, following a socially accepted *mésalliance*, an aristocratic son-in-law would introduce his nouveau riche father-in-law into his drinking circle and an aristocratic father-in-law would do the same for his parvenu son-in-law. An élite circle of the local community would eventually invite a powerful *kakos,* whose material advancement could no longer be ignored, to dine and drink with the good old aristocrats. All this would amount to formally recognizing the social promotion of a particular individual and of his male

[191] For the topical character of the hopes of this kind, see, perhaps, Semonides, fr. 1 W^2, ll. 9–10: 'There is no one among the mortals who would not think of himself that next year he will become a friend of Wealth and of the *agathoi* (*Πλούτῳ τε*

offspring.[191] This situation underlies many bitter passages in Theognis and the Theognidean Corpus.

On the other hand, impoverished aristocrats would gradually cease to be invited or would at best be tolerated as *aklētoi*, 'uninvited'. One may speculate that their sons could play the same role provided that their fathers had succeeded in socializing them into the sympotic lifestyle when they still could afford it, in other words, that they were capable of inheriting the required 'cultural capital' to embrace sympotic poetry, banquetal games, etc. Taking into account the case of Archilochus' Pericles analysed above, it would be tempting to identify at least some portion of the 'non-invited ones' tolerated at symposia with those who were still aristocrats in cultural, but no longer material, terms.

If we leave aside the 'shameless' *aklētoi* and concentrate on the more or less wealthy fellow-drinkers, it can be said that the socially integrative function of the symposion explains the need for an egalitarian ideology within such a group. With the presence of the nouveau riche, and of the aristocrats on their way down the social scale, the political and material inequalities among the diners would all be smoothed over and concealed by the ideology of dreamlike wealth, naturally fostered by the luxurious environment of the venue. Rigorously equal access to all the pleasures of the banquet—to wine, table-talk, poetic performances, etc.—would be a practical sign of this ideal. All this was promoted in a natural way by the night-time drinking of an exiguous and preselected group of friends, in an isolated and small world apart, with its own rules of behaviour and idiosyncratic etiquette.

In this momentarily detached environment, new hierarchies were produced as a result of the incessant rivalry among the feasters, the all-embracing *agōn* regulating the rhythm of the gathering. Despite, and beyond, real-life inequalities, ad hoc sympotic inequalities were shaped solely by cultural means. They did not last forever, but the overall consequence was an aristocratic self-identification in cultural terms, and the general attractiveness of the flowering aristocratic culture. Ambitious *kakoi* striving for social advancement, beyond the requisite economic success, had to learn, alongside their male offspring, some elements of the aristocratic culture and in particular

κἀγαθοῖσιν . . . φίλος)'. For another interpretation of l. 10 see Bartol (1999) 154: 'a friend of the god Ploutos and his accompanying goods'. See also *Theogn.* 1117–1118.

some sympotic poetry. Once ready to join in the social élite of their community in economic terms, they would need at least some rudimentary cultural competences to be admitted.

We must not overlook one important socio-political consequence of the ideological equality of the sympotic group and the mechanisms for selecting its members. Individuals, and not groups, were admitted to these élite circles of highly valued membership. In practice, this meant atomizing the socially advancing groups and melting the old and the new members of the wealthiest social stratum into a rather homogeneous élite animated by a unifying aristocratic ethos. Put briefly, I would define the archaic and early classical symposion as a hub or focal point of the mechanisms of natural selection for the Greek aristocracy.

Understood in these terms, the symposion was about dynamically defining the aristocracy, deciding who was and was not to be counted, and providing those admitted with a perfect forum to confirm, display, and negotiate their aristocratic status. It was the ultimate setting for achieving social recognition by those aspiring to the status of the *aristoi*.

It should be recalled that the socio-political reality of the Greek *polis* did not make this practicable in the public realm and using legal means, since the social position of the aristocracy was never formalized but was defined by custom. The only legally defined social order was the citizen-community at large, in which members were accordingly imbued with a strongly egalitarian ethos. As if making up for these obstacles, the symposion helped the group to achieve self-definition in a private setting and using exclusively cultural means. As such, it was a subtle mechanism for the natural selection and social recognition of the *aristoi*, a mechanism quasi-naturally embedded in the social and political environment of the *polis*.

However, this does not mean that the symposion should be viewed as the site for an anti-*polis* ideology, a potentially subversive institution providing Greek élites with an alternative system of values and an alternative model of political activity, alien to the civic ideals of the

[192] For the notion of the symposion as an 'anti-polis' see e.g. Morris (1996) 33–34; (1997) 13; (2000) esp. 156 and 182–185. Cf. Kurke (1999) *passim*, esp. 18. Hammer (2004) made a thorough and illuminating criticism of this approach. I. Morris' idea is an element of his theory of the—allegedly omnipresent in the archaic period—conflict between the 'elitist ideology' and the 'middling ideology' (Morris 1987, *passim*; Morris 1996; 1997; 1998, esp. 26–27; 2009, esp. 70–73). This reading of the archaic material is

community.[192] On the contrary, the aristocratic banquet complies with the rules of the political game within the *polis*, but supplements them by providing a space to work at the delicate issue of defining the membership of élites in a theoretically egalitarian civic society. In a way, the symposion determines various modes of self-definition by the citizen-body. No ideological conflict between the *kakoi* citizens and the aristocrats revelling at symposia was possible, since 'the worthless ones' were subject to the overwhelming influence of the aristocratic culture in the archaic period and dreamt of access to the aristocratic lifestyle, i.e. admission to the symposia organized by the élite of their local communities.

In the light of the foregoing argument, the question how this delicate mechanism came into being becomes critical to our notion of 'early Greece'.

1.4.2 Symposion as a Type of Feast

After dwelling on my characterization of the symposion, it is worthwhile to likewise check the validity of the theoretical models I briefly presented in my introduction (0.4) to 'sympotic studies'.[193]

Referring to the sociological typology of feasting put forward by Claude Grignon, we would characterize the symposion as a form of 'extra-domestic commensality', more precisely defined as a 'non-institutional' feast and a type of 'leisure commensality'.[194] The notions of a 'minute etiquette' and 'conspicuous outbidding' (although in purely symbolic terms), a strict social segregation creating 'a strategic net of acquaintances' through 'a system of mutual invitations which approves and attests membership' (Grignon 2001, 26)—all this fits perfectly well with the symposion. On the other hand, I have the impression that two other aspects of Grignon's

ultimately based on meaningful utterances by some archaic poets, but it should be noted that Morris' proponents of the 'elitist ideology' are often melic poets, whereas the 'middling' ones are often found in elegiacs; so the contrast seems purely conventional, depending on the requirements of a given genre (the emotional individualism of the 'melic' vs. the wisdom tradition of the elegy). For a rather straightforward application of this theory to the iconography of archaic vase painting, see Neer (2002). See also the criticisms of Morris' theory by Kistler (2004), Yatromanolakis (2009), and Corner (2011).

[193] See above, pp. 12–15.

[194] For Grignon's theory see above, pp. 14–15.

categorization are not suitable for discussing the Greek aristocratic banquet. In the dichotomy between 'everyday commensality' and 'exceptional commensality', the symposion is most certainly not an 'everyday' venue. It could be organized in relation to some solemn occasion in the lives of individuals or communities, but it seems that people gathered at symposia regularly and often without accompanying festive occasions.

Another dichotomy, between 'segregative commensality' and 'transgressive commensality', looks inadequate in relation to the symposion. No doubt, it was all about integrating insiders and excluding 'the other', a secluded venue enabling the appeasement and accentuation of internal conflicts under the influence of a psychoactive substance, allowing 'a lowering of censure and reserve' and thus minimizing the social and emotional distance between fellow-diners. And yet, Grignon's typology cannot do justice to the integrative power and peculiar openness of the Greek aristocratic banquet. In this perspective, the category of 'transgressive commensality' may still be attractive.

First of all, admission to the 'we' group was conditional and could have been temporary. Instead of maintaining the façade of group solidarity, we find such categories of feasters as the 'shadows' (*skiai*) and the 'uninvited ones' (*aklētoi*), which help integrate former outsiders and exclude the déclassé insiders relatively smoothly. It is crucial that this sympotic machinery serves the purpose of integrating former *kakoi* and not just young aristocrats whose sympotic initiation is self-evident and does not affect the 'segregative' nature of the institution. The 'carnivalesque' character of the symposion fits well with its 'transgressive' aspect. And so does the omnipresent principle of competition and constant challenging of one's fellow-feasters according to strict formal rules—which assists in the mediation of real and potential conflicts, but also potentially gives rise to new ones. In the briefest terms possible, I would call the symposion a 'transgressive feast' because of its inner dynamics and its fleeting hierarchies, which consciously ignore the external rankings of the community. Nevertheless, there are fundamental differences. First, Grignon's theory underlines the transgressions between separate social groups or circles, whereas the symposion solely confronts individuals. Secondly, the result of the sympotic transgression was not to eventually recognize and maintain the momentarily and ritually challenged borders. The ultimate goal of such transgressions was to efficiently

integrate all those who emerged victorious from the procedure of mutual 'scrutinizing', thus proving their command of the requisite 'cultural capital' to join the select group.

If we were to adequately categorize the symposion based on Grignon's theory, we would face the striking paradox of labelling it as a 'segregative integrative feast'. This oxymoron, as we shall see later, does justice to the paradoxical nature and logic of the symposion, which both enhances exclusivity and serves the purposes of group-renewal and natural selection of aristocratic élites, emphasizing the equality of the diners while driving their competition. Grignon's categorization proves very useful as it lets us recognize such inherent tensions between different aspects of the symposion.

* * *

Michael Dietler adduced the Greek symposion as a prime example of 'diacritical feasting' (Dietler 2001, 86). Referring his reader to Arjun Appadurai's notion of 'tournaments of value',[195] Dietler observed that 'the practice of diacritical feasting transforms elite feasts into what Appadurai . . . has called "tournaments of value", which serve both to define elite status membership and to channel social competition within clearly defined boundaries'. The symposion, dominated by multifarious physical and intellectual contests, suits this definition since it perfectly embraces the symbolism of the sympotic rivalry. In the concluding pages of this book, I will try to show that the practice of 'tournaments of value' resulted from the needs of the epoch in which the symposion was born.

It is important to stress how well the category of 'diacritical feasting' characterizes the symposion, but it is even more important to emphasize how alien the symposion was to the realities of 'empowering feasting' and 'patron-role feasting'.[196] The differences are so large and concern such basic issues that postulating a priori a certain historical continuity between them, i.e. hypothesizing that symposia had evolved from one or the other 'modalities of convivial politics' seems totally unjustified. Conversely, it seems admissible to postulate a radical discontinuity between them, a discontinuity that was most probably due to the peculiar circumstances under which the symposion came into being—in radical and conscious contrast to earlier

[195] Appadurai (1986) 18–22 (esp. 21). Cf. also above, p. 13.
[196] See above, p. 13.

convivial and commensal customs and institutions. I will try to substantiate this thesis in my conclusion.

1.5 APPENDIX II: SEX AND THE SYMPOSION

Did all the painted fineware of the archaic and classical periods bearing convivial scenes serve symposia? And if they did, were all females shown banqueting in the nude on Greek vases intended and perceived as *hetairai,* or at least as potential sexual objects available to the male symposiasts? Despite a resolute revisionist trend in more recent scholarship,[197] I think we still should answer both questions in the affirmative, so the bulk of the iconographic material at our disposal for sympotic eroticism remains undiminished, including also an abundant dossier of scenes of homoerotic sex, where the social status of naked boys entertaining adult diners may be debated, too.[198] Yet a crucial question remains: what was the relationship between, on the one hand, the sometimes very graphic erotic imagery of Greek vase painting and, on the other, the reality and, even more importantly, the sexual ethics of real-life symposia?[199] In other words, what was permissible at symposia in this respect and what was not?[200] The question seems all the more pertinent since, as we shall see in my following chapters, sex and eroticism accompanied the symposion from the very beginning. This becomes particularly clear if we rely on the urbane testimony of the epigram on the Pithekoussan 'Cup of Nestor', mentioning the sexual desire as fuelled by wine drinking (below, 3.1; see Figure 3.1 below), or if we trust in the pictorial evidence, much more explicit as it juxtaposes human and animal copulation scenes, of a wine-mixing vessel from Eretria, the so-called 'krater of black horses' (below, pp. 264–266; see Figure 5.1 below)—both from the eighth century BC.

[197] Cf., e.g., Kelly Blazeby (2010) and Glazebrook (2012).

[198] See above, p. 34 n. 56, with reference to Bremmer (1990).

[199] The conventional requirements of sympotic poetry, including the idiosyncrasies of iambics, were much more rigorous in this respect, so in principle we are inevitably left here with the rich evidence of archaic and classical pottery. But cf. Pellizer (1990) 180–182, for a handful of (rather late) examples from literary sources.

[200] For a classical treatment of courtship and copulation, including techniques indicating dominant and subordinate roles, see Dover (1989) 91–109.

Before coming to grips with our problem, it is important to touch upon one critical obstacle. Different modalities of drinking, various occasions, the diverse moral standards of their participants and, last but not least, local convivial customs diverging in time and in space—could all determine the relationship between wine drinking and eroticism in each particular case. Furthermore, the main bulk of our iconographic sources—the Attic vase painting of the archaic and classical times—may theoretically stem from locally idiosyncratic Athenian habits and morals. If, however, in accordance with the methodological principles advocated in the introduction to this book (Section 0.3), we do assume the existence of an institution historically coherent enough to be called the symposion, it immediately becomes clear that the role we ascribe to sex at symposia depends on our general idea of this institution. Sex becomes an indispensable element of the symposion if we subscribe to the initiatory interpretation of its function and its origins, namely if we interpret the symposion as one more convivial institution providing the framework for the initiation of aristocratic youth by their adult social peers. This amounts to explaining its provenance in the light of the old Indo-European *Männerbunde*.[201] In many Indo-European societies, such rites often involved what one may call 'asymmetrical homosexual relationships' between adolescents coming of age and their adult partners supervising their social and sexual maturation. In this book, I do not take this path of inquiry. Instead, on the one hand, I link the origins of the symposion, understood as a relatively fresh start in the history of Aegean conviviality, with a particular socio-political constellation of the late Dark Ages (see below, 6.4). On the other hand, my general characterization of the symposion (1.4.1) underscores the function of this institution as a forum for the natural selection of a Greek aristocracy. Accordingly, my assessment of the role of eroticism at symposia will be different.

Besides those general presumptions, I think there are good reasons to de-emphasize the import of sex at Greek aristocratic banquets. For one thing, following my theory, which downplays the importance of the habit of reclining (see next chapter), the actual prevalence of eroticism at symposia is no longer self-evident. More importantly, if we assume that aristocratic youngsters were introduced to their future

[201] See in general Wecowski (2013).

convivial circles by their adult kin, the level of liability of such youth to open homoerotic courtship must have been limited to avoid behaviour that might be plainly offensive to their family. Next, although young slaves, both male and female, were present and in principle much more accessible to the symposiasts, we should not forget that in such social circles of treasured membership one could not afford exposing oneself to ridicule and embarrassment in the eyes of one's peers and neighbours (let us not forget the disgusted reaction to the scandalous behaviour of Hippokleides revealing his private parts while dancing in Herodotus' Book Six[202]). Such considerations would tend to limit open sexual actions and favour a more symbolic and restrained erotic behaviour. Last, but not least, we should not overlook a certain logic behind the *kōmos*, or the drunken carousel rounding off the symposion.[203] The rigorous and ritualized separation between the *kōmos* and the symposion had the effect of creating a distinct social occasion where the usual restrictions and sympotic norms were no longer valid, where drunken excess, including physical violence, unrestrained noisy behaviour and, surely, sex were supposed to become the norm—amid darkness and chaos on the way back from the all-night drinking-party.

This is not to say that regular symposia could not house open sexual activities. As a matter of fact, this must have happened fairly often in the intoxicated and excited atmosphere of the symposion, but such actions would not conform to the informal 'sympotic laws' encouraging moderation and self-control in wine-drinking and other convivial pastimes and would not be feasible as long as a well-ordered banquet was controlled by the symposiarch, and as long as the symposiasts observed the technical rules regulating various forms of their entertainment.[204] Erotic themes raised or alluded to in table talk, poetry, and vase painting, the sexually-laden prizes in many of the sympotic contests, diverse sexually arousing performances by *hetairai*, the very presence of potential sexual objects of both genders (and their palpable physical closeness to the reclining banqueters ever since the introduction of the sympotic couch to the symposion; cf., below, 3.5)—all this was teasing the symposiasts with no prospect of immediately satisfying their desire.

[202] Cf. above, pp. 69–70.
[203] See above, pp. 28–29.
[204] See next chapter.

2

Towards a Definition of the Symposion

2.1 'REJOICE WHILE THE CUP GOES CIRCLING ROUND!'

2.1.1 The Circulating Cup and the Organization of the Symposion

In the fourth book of Plato's *Republic* (420d–e), Socrates defends his vision of the education of the caste of 'guardians' in the ideal city against Adeimantos's objections:

> You mustn't start forcing us to give the guardians the kind of happiness (*eudaimonia*) which will turn them into anything other than guardians. We could perfectly easily dress our farmers in purple robes, and give them gold jewellery to wear, and tell them to work the land when they feel like it. We could let our potters recline on banqueting couches, passing the wine to the right and feasting in front of their fire (*καὶ τοὺς κεραμέας κατακλίναντες ἐπὶ δεξιὰ πρὸς τὸ πῦρ διαπίνοντάς τε καὶ εὐωχουμένους*), with their potters' wheels beside them for when they really felt like doing some pottery. We could make everyone else happy in the same kind of way, so that the whole city would be happy. You mustn't ask us to do that. If we do as you suggest, the farmer will not be a farmer, the potter will not be a potter, nor will anyone else continue to fulfil any of the roles which together give rise to a city (tr. T. Griffith).

The paradoxical notion of inappropriate happiness apportioned to simple potters clearly alludes to the symposion. Plato's shortcut for the symposion is very specific: reclining, toasting each other's health and feasting sumptuously in a cosy atmosphere. But there is something more. The diners drink 'to the right'. Indeed, among the images evoking

the banquet in archaic and classical Greek literature,[1] this is particularly important. Poets, too, very often chose, as a metonymy of the symposion, the image of the circulation of wine cups in the banquet hall. In order to stress the difference between Spartan convivial customs and the (Athenian) symposia, Kritias therefore writes (fr. 6 W^2, ll. 1–4; tr. Ch. B. Gulick): 'this is also a custom at Sparta and a set practice, to drink from the same wine-bearing cup, and not to give toasts, pledging them by name, nor send them round in the circle of the party from left hand to right' (ll. 2–4: *. . . πίνειν τὴν αὐτὴν οἰνοφόρον κύλικα, | μηδ' ἀποδωρεῖσθαι προπόσεις ὀνομαστὶ λέγοντα, | μηδ' ἐπὶ δεξιτερὰν χεῖρα κύκλῳ θιάσου*). The same image recurs in a beautiful visionary fragment of Bacchylides (fr. 20B Snell–Maehler, ll. 5–10),[2] where it is used, alongside the topical 'gifts of Dionysus' and 'hopes of Aphrodite', to evoke the very essence of the symposion: '. . . an adornment for banquets at the month's end, when the sweet compulsion of the speeding cups warms the tender hearts of the young men (ll. 6–7: *. . . εὖτε νέων ἁ[παλὸν] γλυκεῖ' ἀνάγκα | σευομενᾶν κυλίκων θάλπησι θυμόν*), and hope of the Cyprian, mingling with the gifts of Dionysus, makes their hearts flutter' (tr. D. A. Campbell).[3] Also in Alkaios, the call for a more radical drinking than usual[4] is well summed up by the closing phrase '. . . let one cup jostle another' (tr. Campbell; fr. 346 L–P, ll. 5–6: *<ἀ> δ' ἀτέρα τὰν ἀτέραν κύλιξ | ὠθήτω*).[5] And yet again in Phocylides (fr. 14 G–P), 'it behoves one at a symposium, as the cups go round and round (*χρὴ δ' ἐν συμποσίῳ κυλίκων περινισομενάων*), to sit and chat pleasantly while he drinks his wine' (tr. Ch. B. Gulick). Accordingly, we may conclude that for some lyric and elegiac poets, the cups that circulate, 'go round and round', 'speed', or 'jostle one another' during the banquet are key elements in their sympotic imagery.[6]

[1] I have not found the book by Nannini (1988) very useful for my present purpose. For the 'sympotic *Leitmotive*', see Giangrande (1968). Cf. also Bowie (1993).

[2] For this fragment, cf. briefly above, p. 65.

[3] See also a commentary *ad loc.* in Danielewicz (1999) and Maehler (2004) as well as detailed analyses by Fearn (2007) 27–86, esp. 34–46. Cf. also Pindar (fr. 124a–b Snell–Maehler, w. 1–4), clearly involved in an intertextual exchange with Bacchylides, and Dionysius Chalcus, fr. 1 W^2, ll. 1–3. On a possible relationship between the Bacchylides' and Pindar's *encomia*, see recently Fearn (2007) 37–40.

[4] See above, p. 29.

[5] For this fragment of Alkaios, see in particular Rösler (1980) 245–247, esp. 246 n. 328. See also below, n. 13.

[6] Furthermore, although it might be risky to take the images of Greek vase painting for illustrations of the actual course of the symposion, cf. *ARV*^{2} 58/59 [53] (= The Beazley Archive, no. 200443; Oltos, *c.*520 BC, Madrid, Museo Arqueológico Nacional, 11267; see Figure 2.1); the tondo already mentioned from the Ashmolean Museum in

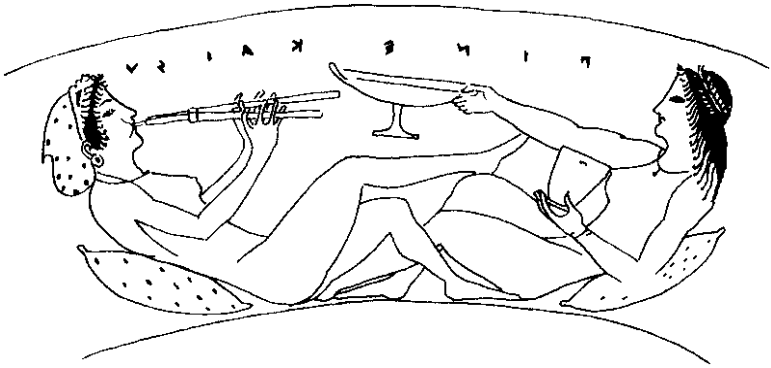


Figure 2.1 Red-figure *kylix* of Oltos (*c.*520 BC), Madrid, Museo Arqueológico Nacional, 11267 (= The Beazley Archive, no. 200443). Drawing by F. Lissarrague. Courtesy of F. Lissarrague

At the very end of Plato's *Banquet*, Socrates, Aristophanes, and Agathon, while 'drinking to the right using a big *phialē*' (223 c: *πίνειν ἐκ φιάλης μεγάλης ἐπὶ δεξιά*), discuss some literary problems put forward by Socrates. Featuring 'sport drinking', this passage is intended to symbolize the restoration of a well-ordered symposion after a 'degenerate' banquet, which opens first with the arrival of Alcibiades (213 e–214 b) and is finally confirmed by the entry of a large group of drunken *kōmastai* (223 b). Plato uses both scenes to stress the fact that the intruders impose their own rules of more and more heavy drinking upon the guests of Agathon. In both cases, the new rules tend to marginalize chatting or talking while drinking (214 b and 223 b).[7] The final scene of the *Banquet* thus restores the equilibrium of wine and speech. Yet the course of the banquet in the house of Agathon was determined by the opening decision to suppress this equilibrium. The participants decided not to drink in a

Oxford (see above, p. 42 n. 95); and a red-figured *psyktēr* of *c.*510 BC attributed to Kleophrades Painter (Princeton University, The Art Museum, 1989.69 = The Beazley Archive, no. 28180).

[7] Both cases of drinking under constraint, but also the final scene where we find a 'big *phialē*' playing a significant role, belong to the category of 'sport drinking', on which see above, pp. 41–44. It should be observed, however, that whereas the rules introduced by Alcibiades still observe the principle of the circulation of vessels from left to right (cf. 214 b *ad fin.*, 214 c and 222 e), those imposed by the aggressive *kōmastai* obviously ignore them (223 b), thus, perhaps, 'atomizing' the *συμπόται* into smaller drinking groups. Hence the final three-man discussion over wine.

compulsory manner (ἐπάναγκες), but only 'for pleasure' (πρὸς ἡδονήν, or πίνειν ὅσον ἂν ἕκαστος βούληται),[8] to dismiss a hired flute girl (176 e), and so, as it were, get rid of sympotic music and poetry. Instead of drinking and singing, they were going to devote themselves to the '*synousia* of *logoi*' (176 e *ad fin.*), and to deliver their *encomia* of Eros 'to the right' (177 d: ἐπὶ δεξιά). Their *logoi* were then supposed to circulate in the dining hall precisely as wine normally does.[9]

'Drinking in a circle' was likewise a very important sympotic procedure for some playwrights, as is clear from Euripides' *Women of Crete* (fr. 468 Kannicht: τὰ δ' ἄλλα χαῖρε κύλικος ἑρπούσης κύκλῳ): 'As for all else, rejoice while the cup goes circling round!' (tr. Ch. B. Gulick), and from Menander's *The Girl from Perinthus* (fr. 397 Körte = fr. 4 Sandbach: οὐδεμίαν ἡ γραῦς ὅλως | κύλικα παρῆκεν, ἀλλὰ πίνειν τὴν κύκλῳ), where an exemplary 'old crone never misses a single cup, but drinks from the circling bowl' (tr. Gulick).[10] Athenaeus, who quotes the two aforementioned fragments (XI 504 a–b), also cites the sympotic command 'to rush it about', περισοβεῖν {ἐν κύκλῳ},[11] which presumably means simply τῷ κύκλῳ πίνειν, 'to drink in a circle' (504 a). The command is directed to a young cup-bearer who successively pours wine to the participants of the symposion as they drink it 'in a circle' passing their cup(s) from one to another 'to

[8] This means that each symposiast drank from his cup, refilling it when needed (as in fr. 6 W^2, ll. 2–4 of Kritias, below, p. 89). However, it was just a temporary solution and everything went back to the normal way of drinking. An interesting case of abolishing the *epidexia* drinking can be found in the *Letter to Diagoras* (*ap.* Athen. XI 499 C = Lynkeus, fr. nr 6: Dalby 2000, 385) by Lynkeus of Samos, active *c.*300 BC, brother of the historian Duris and disciple of Theophrastus. Lynkeus's decision to give a *lagynos* of wine to each individual diner may just be a radical idea of the Samian gastronomer, or else a witness to the new epoch in Greek drinking habits (cf. esp. Kwapisz, forthcoming; in general, cf. Rotroff 1996). The latter seems more likely to me.

[9] Likewise, in the *Banquet* of Xenophon, the *logoi* of the banqueters 'go round' (e.g. 4, 20; 64 *ad fin.*) the dining-room in the house of Kallias—here, however, without replacing the wine that circulates too (cf. 2, 26–27). Cf. also *Adesp. eleg.* 27 W^2, ll. 7–8, where 'in turn' (ἐν μέρει) alludes to the same movement of sympotic *logoi*. On this poem, see above, p. 73.

[10] The text is not assured. In his edition, F. H. Sandbach hesitates over whether one should follow Kaibel's idea to read ἀλλ' ἔπιν' ἀεὶ κύκλῳ. This does not change much as far as the poetic image under scrutiny is concerned.

[11] Where ἐν κύκλῳ—perhaps rightly deleted by Nauck—may well be a pedantic gloss. Cf. Athenaeus, IV 130 c and 426 a (where Amphis, fr. 18 K–A is adduced), Menander, fr. 224 Körte (*The Inspired Woman* [*Theophoroumenē*], fr. 3 Sandbach), and Hesychius, *s.v.* περισοβεῖν. Cf. also Gomme & Sandbach (1973) 407.

the right'.[12] This procedure is well illustrated by a character in Xenophon's *Banquet*, who compares good servants to skilled charioteers, since they should be capable of 'driving the cups round faster' (2, 27: *θᾶττον περιελαύνοντας τὰς κύλικας*).[13] Which is to say that wine cups move in a circle just as racing chariots.

Of course, Plato's *Banquet* is not a regular symposion, often slipping past the realm of the conceivable. It strongly resembles the 'pure' symposion of Xenophanes (fr. B 1 W^2), where heavy drinking and 'hubristic' poetry are strictly prohibited.[14] Nevertheless, the idea of delivering speeches 'to the right' is natural. As we have already seen in Kritias' fr. 6 W^2 (ll. 1–4), the circulation of the cup is closely related to sympotic toasts, which 'circulate' together with the wine cups during the symposion.[15] Later in the same poem by Kritias, we read the following (ll. 5–7; tr. Gulick, slightly modified): 'Bowls they have, a Lydian hand, Asiatic-born, invented,[16] as well as toasts they pass from left to right, and the custom of challenging by name him to whom one dedicates the toast' (*. . . καὶ προπόσεις ὀρέγειν ἐπιδέξια, καὶ προκαλεῖσθαι | ἐξονομακλήδην ᾧ προπιεῖν ἐθέλει*). In a fragment of Dionysius Chalcus (fr. 1 W^2, ll. 1–3; tr. Gulick, adapted), we get another confirmation of the habit of doing things *epidexia* during the symposion: 'Receive, Theodorus, this poem pledged as a toast from me. I send it from left to right to thee first of our company (*. . . ἐγὼ δ' ἐπιδέξια πέμπω | σοὶ πρώτῳ*) etc.' This time it is a sophisticated poem requiring a response, not a simple toast, that is sent to the neighbour on the right.[17]

[12] Despite the doubts expressed by some modern scholars, this certainly implies an anti-clockwise movement (cf. also Braunlich 1936), as is indicated by a scene in Aristophanes' *Wasps* (*Vesp.* 1235–1236), where a certain Theoros 'caps' the *skolion* put forward by Kleon (for this procedure, see above, p. 51 with n. 119 and below, pp. 94–96), while 'reclining at his feet'.

[13] See also Pollux, VI 30. Cf. Pindar, fr. 124a–b Maehler (ll. 1–4), on which above, p. 86 n. 3. In Xen. *Symp.* 2, 23–27, we have two possible forms of 'sport drinking': one big vessel circulating in the dining-room or numerous small ones refilled as fast as possible by the cup-bearers (cf. above, p. 42 n. 92). One can also combine both methods as in Alkaios (fr. 346 L–P).

[14] In general, cf. p. 73 with n. 190.

[15] Cf. also Kritias, fr. 8 G–P, l. 8. On toasts see above, p. 50 with n. 111.

[16] The poet is of course ascribing the invention of some important sympotic procedures (and perhaps even the invention of the symposion itself) to the Lydians in order to emphasize his disapproval of these allegedly effeminate customs. But see below, p. 99, for a quite different view of the symposion and that of its fundamental procedures in Kritias' fr. 8 G–P.

[17] Cf. above, p. 86 n. 3.

In a famous and much debated passage of the *Wasps* of Aristophanes (ll. 1219–1248), one character in the play instructs another on how to behave during an élite banquet.[18] Here, the most important sympotic competence is identified as being able to δέχεσθαι τὰ σκόλια (1222, 1225, and 1242), or to 'cap the *skolia*'. A scholion to this passage of the *Wasps* (1222b), probably based on the work *On Musical Competitions* by Dicaearchus, comments on the expression τὰ σκόλι' ὅπως δέξει καλῶς, 'make sure you take up the songs well' (l. 1222; tr. MacDowell), as follows: 'ὅπως παραδέξῃ.' ἐν κύκλῳ γὰρ ᾖδον τὰ σκόλια, ἃ εἰσι δὲ παροίνιαι ᾠδαί, '. . . for they used to sing the *skolia*, i.e. wine-songs, from left to right'. These kinds of 'wine-songs' circulated in the dining room and were performed by the diners 'by turns'.[19] This is further confirmed by a gloss in Hesychius (*s.v.* τὴν ἐπιδεξιάν): περιέφερον ἐν τοῖς συμποσίοις ἐπὶ δεξιὰ τὸ πάλαι κιθάραν, εἶτα μυρίνην, πρὸς ἣν ᾖδον, 'during the symposia, in ancient times they used to carry round to the right a *kithara*, then a myrtle twig, according to which they sang'. Indeed, alongside the lyre and myrtle twig, Pollux adds a cup (*ekpōma*) to our list of the objects that used to be carried round ἐπὶ δεξιά, regulating the succession of songs (VI 108).[20] An elegy of Dionysius Chalcus is even more revealing (fr. 4 W^2, l. 1): 'pour out hymns like wine—from left to right (ὕμνους οἰνοχοεῖν ἐπιδέξια)—for you and for us . . . '. This is much the same idea as that of Plato's '*synousia* of *logoi*', where speeches could even pretend to replace wine (177 d) during a philosophical symposion. Still in Book VII of Plutarch's *Table Talk* (711 e), one of the diners says: 'Therefore, as you see, I pass to our dear friend Diogenianus, along with this cup, the duty of "sluicing the bitter brine from our ears with fresh springs of speech"'.[21]

[18] See above all Vetta (1983*c*); MacDowell (1971) *ad loc.*; and recently Collins (2004) esp. 99–110. On wine and the symposion in Aristophanes see also E. L. Bowie (1995) and A. M. Bowie (1997); cf. Pütz (2007).

[19] See Collins (2004) 88–90, with the most important sources adduced. On different categories of *skolia* see Collins (2004) 84–98, esp. 91–98. Cf. below, p. 95.

[20] An interesting fragment of Eupolis (395 K–A = 361 Kock, with Olson 2007, *ad loc.*) may well hint at a similar procedure: δεξάμενος δὲ Σωκράτης τὴν ἐπιδέξ'<ᾷδων>| Στησιχόρου πρὸς τὴν λύραν, οἰνοχόην ἔκλεψεν (the first line, corrupt in the manuscripts, was elucidated by Reitzenstein 1893, 31 n. 1). For another passage pointing to the same effect, and underscoring again the correspondence between poetic performances executed 'to the right' and their musical accompaniment, see *Theogn.* 943–944 (the image was not clear to Van Groningen 1966, 359).

[21] Tr. E. L. Minar; quotation from Pl. *Phaedr.* 243 d.

For my purpose, it is enough to stress that the circular movement of poetry and speeches follows the rules of the distribution of wine, served *epidexia* to the feasters.[22] Another scene, at the end of Plato's *Banquet*, shows the importance and possible implications of this sympotic principle. There is a very interesting exchange of erotic jokes between Alcibiades and Socrates (222 e), who amusingly try to establish who should be praised by whom after a speech of the former praising the latter. In order to make that determination, they must decide who should recline beside whom on their couch, since the succession of their performances is still regulated by the rule of doing things *epidexia*. In fact, what it is all about is who should praise the beautiful Agathon, and therefore recline next to him.

How should we envision the technical side of the procedure we have thus far been following? The wording of several passages in Xenophon's *Banquet* is perhaps noteworthy. At some point (4, 64), we read about a 'round of talk' (*ἡ περίοδος τῶν λόγων*) coming to an end.[23] Later on (8, 1), Socrates 'begins a new theme' (*πάλιν αὖ καινοῦ λόγου κατῆρχεν*) of the table talk. The 'round of talk' is here used as a quasi-technical term. The first to speak or perform a piece of poetry is the diner reclining 'first' (i.e. to the right of the entrance of the *andrōn*)[24] and the last to have the floor is the one who reclines 'last'.[25] In the meantime, as we have seen, all the diners were supposed to 'cap', 'take up' (*hypolambanein*), 'receive' (*dechesthai*), and 'respond to' (*anteipein*) diverse *logoi*, poems, or verbal utterances in turn.[26] In practical terms, the further one reclined from the place a

[22] For the circulation of wine, see also, e.g., Athen. 426 a; 482 b; and 419 e–420 c. In Plato's late *Laws* (671 c) we read of the ideal symposion envisaged by the philosopher: its participants would observe the custom of taking turns (*. . . κατὰ μέρος . . .*) in speaking and remaining silent, in drinking and singing, which no doubt alludes to the habit of doing things 'to the right'.

[23] Cf. also an 'end of the conversation' in Xen. *Symp*. 9, 1, or 'end of this *logos* [i.e. this theme—M.W.]' in Plut. *Sept. sap. conv.* 154 f and 155 d *ad fin.*

[24] See, e.g., Pl. *Symp*. 177 d; cf. Plut. *Sept. sap. conv*. 151 f and, perhaps, *Quaest. conv.* 718 b. Cf. above, p. 36 with n. 65, for the egalitarian order of the Greek dining-hall.

[25] As in Pl. *Symp*. 177 e.

[26] See Plut. *Quaest. conv.* 621 b; 718 e; cf. Athen. 457 e (more on this passage below, pp. 93–94). A mysterious incipit of Solon's fr. 4a W^2, l. 1 (*gignōskō . . .*), was interpreted by Bravo (1989) 65 (with n. 24) as a response to a riddle put forward to the poetic persona of this poem by his predecessor at a symposion. Many 'sympotic *catenae*' in the Theognidean Corpus most probably stem from the process of 'capping' sympotic verse. In general cf. Vetta (1992) esp. 196–197; cf. also Vetta (1984).

given 'round' begun the better one's chances were of having the upper hand, at least in some intellectual contests, for he (or she) had more time to meditate on his (or her) performance (cf., however, a paradoxical opinion on the matter by Socrates in Pl. *Symp*. 177 e). It was possible, although unusual and anything but recommended, accidentally or intentionally, to skip one's turn, but it must have been close to compulsory to present excuses for so doing.[27]

The rule subordinating various sympotic utterances to the order of the distribution of wine shows unambiguously that in a normal situation there was only one cup circulating in the banquet hall.[28] A diner takes the floor when he has been given the wandering cup by his (or her, in the case of a *hetaira*) predecessor. Technically speaking, between the two neighbouring symposiasts, the cup usually passes through the hands of a cup-bearer who refills it from a wine jug. Very large cups, when not gulped down 'at one draught', could be passed directly from one symposiast to another without a refill, gradually consumed by consecutive diners amid toasting each other's health,[29] just as in the case of the Polish 'crippled cup' (see Figure 1.3). We can also assume that in practice every diner would have an additional cup on the table beside the *klinē*, in case he (or she) became thirsty before the arrival of the 'speeding cup'. The cup obviously could not circulate too fast, given the performances required from each drinker. This was also the case at the 'noble banquets' in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in early-modern times, and two cups in the hands of individual symposiasts painted on some Attic vases may allude to the same practice (cf. Figure 2.1, above).[30] On the other hand, ritual 'sport drinking' might have used either one particularly large *kylix*, or a certain number of unusually small ones, as we learn from Xenophon's *Banquet*

[27] See, famously, Pl. *Symp.* 185 c–d, for Aristophanes skipping his turn because of hiccups, most probably diplomatically, and thus avoiding competing immediately with Pausanias's excellent speech. Cf. above, pp. 57–58 with n. 147, and *Theogn*. 815–816; 939–942; 989–990.

[28] To my earlier testimonies, I would also add a passage from Ar. *Eq.* 1289: 'the same cup' here clearly alludes to the sympotic practice. Cf. also Alexis, fr. 293 K–A.

[29] The shape of some vessels, such as *kantharoi*, made it possible to pass the cup conveniently to one's neighbour. See also below, p. 288.

[30] See J. Kitowicz, *A Description of Customs in the Reign of Augustus III* [in Polish], Chapter VI. (Warsaw, 1985), pp. 225–226. Cf. also *Theogn.* 473–474 (for what seems an humane, but not necessarily sociable measure).

(2, 23–27), 'speeding' round the banquet hall.[31] What is crucial to my argument is that the single circulating cup attracted special attention from our archaic and classical authorities, thus becoming a convenient shortcut for the symposion as such.

Beyond poetic or other literary performances, toasts (and we should not forget that some sympotic poems assumed the form of a toast) were also subordinated to the manner in which wine was circulated.[32] It comes as no surprise therefore that non-literary sympotic competitions, in particular those involving wine, should be organized in the very same manner as the 'sport drinking' contest.[33] The shots of the game of *kottabos* most probably followed the sympotic rule of 'doing things to the right' as well.[34] It is more striking to realize that some crucial elements of the sympotic ritual similarly observed this principle. This is the way the opening triple libation was effectuated, and even the garlands were distributed to the guests 'from left to right'.[35]

In point of fact, we have every right to assume that virtually all sympotic entertainments were organized in this manner. Let us remind ourselves that in Kritias' fragment 6 W^2 (ll. 6–7) the toasts circulating *epidexia* are closely connected with the procedure of *prokaleisthai*, i.e. with 'challenging' or 'provoking' other diners to respond.[36] The same is true of the aforementioned *skolia* discussed in the *Wasps* of Aristophanes,[37] and it likely holds good for the erudite game of 'capping' the utterances of one's predecessor with appropriate verses of classical epic or iambic poetry (briefly described in Clearchus' treatise *On Proverbs*, fr. 63 Wehrli; *ap*. Athen. X 457 e–458 f).[38] Some authorities suggest the

[31] See above, pp. 88–89 with n. 13.

[32] In addition to the poems already adduced, see also, perhaps, Alexis, fr. 55 K–A.

[33] See above, p. 86, for Alkaios, fr. 346 L–P, ll. 5–6 and Xen. *Symp*. 2, 27. Cf., perhaps, Amphis, fr. 18 K–A. Cf. also the great 'cup of Alexander' in Plut. *Quaest. conv*. 623 f–624 a.

[34] Cf. Wecowski (2002*a*) 355–361.

[35] Cf. Antiphanes, fr. 172 K–A, ll. 1–4: in l. 4, the phrase 'each man took it [*sc*. the cup] in his right hand' obviously suggests consecutive use of the same cup. For this libation, see above, p. 39. For the garlands, see Matro, fr. 1 Olson–Sens (with comm. *ad loc*.); cf. Plut. *Quaest. conv*. 645 d.

[36] See *LSJ*, *s.v.* Cf. also a commentary *ad loc.* by Bartol (1999).

[37] See above, p. 90.

[38] I adopt here the interpretation of the corrupt passage 457 e suggested by Bravo (1989) 66 (cf. Collins 2004, 131–132). See also sch Ar. *Vesp*. 1222a: the game sometimes consisted in rounding off a quotation from a 'classic' poet adduced by one's predecessor. In general, cf. Collins (2004) 89–90. See also below on *skolion*.

same principle for other erudite contests called 'riddles' (*griphoi*),[39] and we hear from Plutarch (621 e–f) of the same rule in the game of 'ordinances' (*prostagmata*).[40] What is more, it seems that even the procedures for imposing 'penalties' and awarding 'prizes' in sympotic games were subject to the same rule of doing things 'to the right'.[41]

As far as I can see, what is striking is the fact that very few elements of the sympotic ceremony and pastimes did not observe this principle. Let me mention only two of them, whose existence seems indisputable based on our relatively early sources. In a fragment of Theophrastus' treatise *On Drunkenness* (fr. 123 Wimmer; *ap.* Athen. XV 693 c–d), we learn that the libation (literally 'toast') in honour of the Good Daemon at the end of the *deipnon* 'is taken only in small quantity, just as a reminder, through a mere taste, of the strength in the god's generous gift; . . . and after making obeisance three times, they take it [i.e. the cup—M.W.] from the table (*καὶ τρίτον προσκυνήσαντες λαμβάνουσιν ἀπὸ τῆς τραπέζης κτλ.*) etc.' (tr. Ch. B. Gulick)[42]. As Gulick rightly observed, the cup 'was not passed round the couches, but drunk by all company standing',[43] which means that each diner had an individual cup prepared for him at that point.[44] To my mind, the fact that the cup did not wander among the symposiasts is to be understood in connection with the highly parsimonious consumption of the (undiluted) wine. The 'Good Daemon' is a dangerous and terrifying divinity with whom no communion is desirable—be it wine shared by men with the god when pouring the libation or the cup circulating among the diners and thus uniting them with the god.

In current scholarship, a certain epistemological restraint is de rigueur on the once hotly disputed subject of the sympotic game

[39] See e.g. Antiphanes, fr. 122 K–A, esp. ll. 1–4 (*ap.* Athen. X 448 f–449 a). Cf. a complex procedure of drawing lots in Plut. *Quaest. conv.* 737 d–e.

[40] See esp. 621 f: 'and when it was his [i.e. Agamestor's—M.W.] turn to give ordinances . . .' (*τοῦ δὲ προστάσσειν περιελθόντος εἰς αὐτόν κτλ.*). But see already Pl. *Symp.* 214 c.

[41] Thus, Antiphanes' fr. 75 K–A (on which see above, p. 54), esp. ll. 4–10, suggests that a cup of brine, i.e. a 'penalty drink' for those defeated in the contest of 'riddles', was usually passed around. This implies that the one capable of solving the circulating 'riddle' simply handed over the cup untouched to the next diner. In Pollux, VI 107, a very contorted passage, we read of some 'prizes' for those who solve a sympotic 'riddle' (a piece of meat in the event) 'passed around' in the dining-room.

[42] For the whole ritual, see above, p. 38.

[43] In a note 'e' *ad loc.* (vol. VII, p. 213).

[44] *Pace* Ganschinietz (1918) col. 40.

called *skolion*.[45] In his book *Master of the Game: Competition and Performance in Greek Poetry*, Derek Collins points out that 'skolion', with its many variants, is essentially the game of 'capping' poetic verses by competing diners at symposia.[46] This general conclusion seems undoubtedly right, but it does not excuse us from explaining the meaning of the term *skolion* (σκόλιον).

Our ancient authorities, all probably stemming from Dicaearchus's treatise *On Musical Contests* (fr. 88 Wehrli = sch Pl. *Gorg.* 451 e; cf. *Suda* [Σ 643 Adler] and Photius, *Lex.* [Σ 523], *s.v.* σκολιόν), comment on this issue as follows (tr. D. Collins). '*Skolion*: the drinking song (ἡ παροίνιος ᾠδή), as Dicaearchus says . . . , because there were three types of song: one was sung by all [so a choral song—M.W.], another by each person one after another (καθ' ἕνα ἑξῆς), and a third by the most educated since the order was random (ὑπὸ τῶν συνετωτάτων, ὡς ἔτυχε τῇ τάξει). It is called *skolion* (because of the order).'[47] Ancient scholars developed this definition in two ways. First, again following Dicaearchus (fr. 89 Wehrli = sch Ar. *Nub.* 1364c), they added that the *skolia* were accompanied by diverse objects held in turn by each singer (myrtle or laurel twig, a lyre, or some sympotic vessel, etc.).[48] Secondly, as Phyllis and Aristoxenus (fr. 125 Wehrli = sch Pl. *Gorg.* 451 e) specify, the name *skolion* (in the sense of 'crooked' or 'zigzag') was devised because of the complex trajectory of the song in the banqueting room.[49] Additionally, it was also suggested (sch Ar. *Vesp.* 1222a) that the term comes from the difficulty (*dyskolia*) inherent in the game, which made all diners perform in a random order.[50]

In view of my argument regarding the organization of sympotic pastimes, I think there is perhaps a better way to grasp the original

[45] Several ingenious (though mistaken) hypotheses regarding the original meaning of the term skolion have been put forward in recent decades. See, for instance: Teodorsson (1989); Lambin (1993); Liapis (1996). The classical discussion on the issue is still highly revealing, though; see Reitzenstein (1893) esp. 3–44; Aly (1927); Severyns (1934); Vetta (1983*c*). Recently, see also Fabbro (1995) and Collins (2004) 84–134. Cf. Cingano (2003).

[46] Esp. Collins (2004) 85.

[47] Cf. also sch *Ar. Vesp.* 1238c.

[48] Cf. above, p. 90.

[49] Cf. Athen. 694 a and Plut. *Quaest. conviv.* 615 b–c, with an utterly anachronic interpretation by Plutarch.

[50] Another explanation says that the reason for singing *skolia* in a 'crooked' way was the intoxication of the diners (Proklos, 60 Severyns [cf. Severyns 1934, 851–853]; *Etymologicum Magnum*, *s.v.* σκολιά [718, 35]).

meaning of the term, already forgotten by our ancient authorities. Let us observe that in Dicaearchus's list (fr. 88 Wehrli), the second and the third type of drinking song are obviously contrasting. Performed 'by each person one after another', the songs proceed in accordance with the *epidexia* principle, circulating regularly in the dining hall. In classical times, the term 'skolion' seems to assume a generalized meaning to denote all types of songs that were 'capped' by diners.[51] However, the original sense must have been more specific. The disquieting etymology that derives the term *skolion* from the adjective *skolios* becomes fully understandable when we assume that—as I have tried to show in this chapter—almost all sympotic games and pastimes were subject to the rule of circulation 'to the right'. The 'upgraded' version of the game, the poetic contest intended to take the performers by surprise, might have been called 'the crooked one' because of the contrast with the norm of sympotic performances.

To summarize: in our extant data, I can see only two unambiguous exceptions, or better, deviations from the *epidexia* principle in the sympotic context. Both may be viewed as a deliberate breach of this principle in order to achieve a well-defined goal. We may be fairly confident that there were other 'exceptions' of this kind, concerning sympotic games that we are ignorant of today. The point is simply that when confronted with a consistent sympotic custom, they all look, or might have looked, as purposeful 'deviations' from the norm.

2.1.2 The Ritual Origins of the *Epidexia* Practice

The importance of this sympotic rule should attract our particular attention. True, one could minimize the weight of this phenomenon by arguing that it was just a happy way to do things—during a banquet or at some other occasion.[52] And we all remember the significance of the apotropaic element in the ritual of the symposion,

[51] One may speculate that this terminological twist happened in the time when the majority of symposiasts were not musically and poetically competent enough to 'cap' *skolia* unprepared, i.e. surprised by the random order of poetic performances.

[52] On the symbolic meaning of the movement of cups 'to the right' at symposia see Bartol (1999) 451 (commenting on Kritias fr. 6 W^2, l. 4); cf. Gernet (1968) esp. 131–132. See also Braunlich (1936) esp. 154–156. In general, cf. also Cuillandre (1944) and Vidal-Naquet (1986) 61–82.

so this interpretation would make sense.[53] There is no doubt, in addition, as to a deep ritual meaning of the *epidexia* procedure. Perhaps the only good analogy to this custom is the ceremonial circumambulation of the sacrificial altar by the procession bringing the sacrificial animal to the altar.[54] Therefore, it would be tempting to hypothesize that the *epidexia* rule might derive from the ritual libation, which probably observed the same order and followed the same logic as the sacrificial procession.

However, a purely ritualistic interpretation of the *epidexia* principle does not suffice. It is important to observe that during a symposion one does different things not just to the right but in a circular way, following the path of the circulating wine. The happy direction seems less important than the fact of subordinating all convivial pastimes to the rules of the distribution of wine. Before we tackle a deeper meaning and deeper reasons for this custom, we need to move from the convivial practice to common sympotic ideals and study the role this custom plays in ideal visions of the symposion as a social institution.

2.2 'ANTI-SYMPOSIA' IN GREEK THOUGHT

2.2.1 The Circulating Cup and the 'Anti-Symposion'

In a famous passage of Aristophanes' *Wasps* staged in 422 BC,[55] Bdelykleon teaches his conservative father Philokleon how to behave at a symposion. This must have been a popular theme in Attic comedy. In the next century, a similar case of 'sympotic education' can be found in three extant fragments of the comedy *Rustics* (*Agroikoi*) by Anaxandrides (frr. 1–3 K–A). In fr. 1, a young socialite (A.) initiates another character of the play (B.) into the symposion (tr. S. D. Olson, adapted):[56] '(A.) What style are you prepared to drink

[53] See above, pp. 39–40 and 74. [54] Cf. Mehl (2002).

[55] Ar. *Vesp.* 1208–1264. Cf. also above, p. 90.

[56] Olson 2007, no. H11, with comm. *ad loc.* In my interpretation, I follow the distribution of the dialogue among the characters as adopted in *PCG* (K–A edition). As for the expression *τὸν ἐπιδέξι'*[*α*], I think what is implied here is *τρόπον* (*πίνειν*) *vel sim.*, since this phrase responds to the initial question *τίνα . . . πίνειν τρόπον . . .*; (ll. 1–2), repeated by the second character of the dialogue (l. 2/3). Of course, at symposia one speaks but also drinks 'to the right'. We know close to nothing about the funerary rite alluded to in ll. 5–6 (see also next note).

now? Tell me! (B.) What style are we prepared to drink in? Whatever style you'd like. (A.) I suppose, father, that you want us to proceed drinking from left to right and speak in honour of the man who's drinking? (*τὸν ἐπιδέξι'*[*α*] [sc. *τρόπον* (*πίνειν*)] . . . *λέγειν ἐπὶ τῷ πίνοντι*) (B.) Proceed from left to right and speak? Apollo! Like over a corpse?'

In this exchange, drinking and speaking 'to the right' again becomes a metonymy for the symposion. Only an uncouth rustic would not be aware of this, associating the custom of speaking (and perhaps also drinking) 'to the right' solely with the funerary rite, for us rather mysterious, of *perideipnon*.[57] The poor creature had never heard of the symposion! The point being that a civilized person, at the very least, was supposed to know that the symposion was all about doing things *epidexia*.

In a fragment of the *Constitution of the Lacedaemonians* by Kritias (DK 88 B 33 = *FGrHist* 338A F 10; *ap.* Athen. XI 463 e–f), in keeping with his general idea of the Spartan way of drinking and the generally more sober customs of the Spartans,[58] we find a neat generalization regarding the local idiosyncrasies in Greek drinking customs (tr. W. S. Morison, adapted): 'The Chian and Thasian man makes pledges from large cups passed to the right (*ἐκ μεγάλων κυλίκων ἐπὶ δεξιά*), the Athenian from small cups passed to the right (*ἐκ μικρῶν ἐπὶ δεξιά*), and the Thessalian pledges enormous cups [passed] to whomever he wishes (*ἐκπώματα προπίνει ὅτῳ ἂν βούλωνται μεγάλα*), but the Lakedaimonian drinks individually from the cup at his side (*τὴν παρ' αὑτῶι ἕκαστος πίνει*); his cup-bearer pours just so much as he might drink' (*ὅσον ἂν ἀποπίῃ*).[59]

At first glance, Kritias' choice of which Greek communities (*poleis*) to include in his argument may look accidental, but the logic of this passage is in fact remarkable and highly revealing. We face two contrasting pairs of oppositions. The first group, gathering together those who drink 'to the right', contrasts the famously rich and

[57] See Olson 2007, *ad loc*., with further references there on p. 310. To which one should add an interesting analogy from Statius, *Theb.* VI 215 with sch *in loc.* In general, see briefly *ThesCRA* II 4a IIIA, p. 247a.

[58] Cf. Kritias fr. 6 W^2, with my remarks above, p. 86. Cf. also below, pp. 306–308, where I comment on DK 88 B 33 from another perspective.

[59] A brief comm. *ad loc.* by W. S. Morison in *BNJ* 338A F 24 is rather disappointing in this respect. At present, I am not concerned with the historical validity of this passage. But cf. below, pp. 306–307.

luxurious Thasians and Chians with the more moderate Athenians,[60] whereas the second pair juxtaposes the notoriously self-indulgent and wealthy Thessalians with the severe Spartans.[61] Within both groups, the contrast is based on respective moderation, or lack thereof, in drinking, namely on the size of the cups involved and the manner and intensity of pledging toasts, i.e. of drinking.[62] But most important is the general opposition that rests between the two groups. The emblematically immoderate Thessalians and the proverbially austere Lacedaemonians are extremes, contrasting with normal drinking customs. Beyond all the differences between their drinking habits, Athenians, Chians, and Thasians represent the Greek norm. The habit of drinking *epidexia* provides the background against which exotic customs of the Greek 'Others' are viewed.

A striking development of this idea can be found in fr. 8 G–P of Kritias. Whereas his fr. 6 W^2 offers a negative picture of the symposion in juxtaposition with the feasts of the Lacedaemonians,[63] here Kritias provides a positive and indeed idealized image of the institution (ll. 6–10; tr. Gulick). 'Never shall love of thee [i.e. of Anacreon—M.W.] grow old or die, so long as a slave-boy solemnly bears round water and wine mingled for the cups, dispensing toasts from left to right (ll. 5–7: . . . *ἔστ' ἂν ὕδωρ οἴνῳ συμμειγνύμενον κυλίκεσσιν | παῖς διαπομπεύῃ, προπόσεις ἐπιδέξια νωμῶν*) etc.' Alongside the feminine choirs of *pannychis* and the *kottabos* game,[64] this compressed image of the ideal symposion contains two elements: the habit of mixing wine with water and the circulation of cups and the convivial toasts *epidexia*. The latter element also appears in Kritias' fr. 6 W^2, but in a fully negative light.

[60] Cf., e.g., Kritias, fr. 1 G–P, ll. 4–5 (DK 88 B 2 = *BNJ* 338A F 1b, with comm.) for Chios, as well as Hdt. VI 42, 2, for Thasos.

[61] For the Thessalian wealth, see Kritias, DK 88 B 31 (= *BNJ* 338A F 8, with comm. *ad loc.*); Kritias, fr. 1 G–P, l. 4 and fr. 8 W^2 (= 6 G–P). Cf. also Theocritus, *Id.* XVI 34–39. The proverbially sumptuous nature of the Thessalian *deipna* is clear in Plato's *Crito* (53 e–54 a).

[62] Cf. Kritias, fr. 6 W^2, esp. ll. 1–4 and 22–27.

[63] See above, p. 89.

[64] For the *pannychis*, see in general Bravo (1997) *passim*, where Kritias fr. 8 G–P is also discussed (at pp. 25–29). Although I must admit that at the first sight 'feminine choirs' seem not quite appropriate here, I am not convinced by B. Bravo's view that the whole fragment mentioning *pannychides* must have belonged once to 'una lista poetica di *πρῶτοι εὑρεταί* di vari generi di poesia' (p. 29). I would rather say that this particularly solemn genre fits well into the image of the ideal symposion. On the 'first discoverers' motif (*prōtoi heuretai*) see recently Bartol (2006) with n. 1 for earlier bibliography.

It is very well known that the habit of drinking wine mixed with water was a mark of Greek cultural identity and even civilized life: in principle, barbarians drink undiluted wine.[65] Meanwhile, we should not forget some other traits of Greek convivial habits. In book four (151 e–152 d *init.*), Athenaeus quotes a long passage of Poseidonios' *Histories* (*FGrHist* 87 F 15 [= 67 Edelstein–Kidd = 170 Theiler]), where the Stoic philosopher presents the most striking convivial customs of the Celts.[66] First of all, the Celts eat large quantities of meat while drinking. When a number of Celts dine together, they sit in a specially arranged circle: the mightiest among them (distinguished for his bravery, wealth, or pedigree) sits in the middle, 'like a chorus leader'. Armed men can participate in their banquets (a shocking thing in itself!),[67] where they drink unmixed wine ('sometimes a little water is added') or more often beer. Poseidonios' description ends with peculiar emphasis: 'the slave carries the drink round from left to right and from right to left; this is the way in which they are served' (152 d *init.*: *περιφέρει δὲ ὁ παῖς ἐπὶ τὰ δεξιὰ καὶ τὰ λαιά· οὕτως διακονοῦνται*).

In this 'mirror of Poseidonios', the Greeks could look at themselves, easily detecting strange and barbarian opposites of their own habits, 'convivial otherness', so to speak.[68] This passage can likewise be instructive for us. Unlike the Greeks, who used to eat meat during the *deipnon* before the symposion, the Celts consume meat and wine at the same time; they do not observe the separation between drinking and dining, which is the very essence of the symposion. The wine they drink is undiluted, but they also drink beer, and both customs are undoubtedly marks of their barbarism. Up to this point we learn

[65] See above, p. 41 with n. 85.

[66] For an excellent brief introduction to the inner logic of this section of Athenaeus where a series of descriptions of, and anecdotes pertaining to, diverse non-Greek convivial customs can be found, see Schmitt Pantel (2011) 435–438. In what follows, however, I am not concerned with Athenaeus' own ideas on the issue, nor with the underlying Greek ideas of the relationship between banquet, power, and society, but with the more specific problem of the circulation of wine, and of its absence in diverse non-Greek peoples, as understood by the writers serving as sources of information for Athenaeus' collection. Cf. also Edelstein & Kidd (1989) 307–315 on this fragment.

[67] For the potential consequences of this habit, see Athen. 154 b (quoting Poseidonios, *FGrHist* 87 F 16 = fr. 68 Edelstein–Kidd = 171a Theiler). In general, cf. Van Wees (1998).

[68] On this fragment of Poseidonios and its context in Athenaeus see Schmitt Pantel (2011) esp. 425–438 and Bruit & Schmitt-Pantel (1986). Cf. also Malitz (1983) 188–190.

about what is, *a priori,* to be expected of 'barbarians', but there are two more elements of Poseidonios' description. Like the Greeks, the Celts eat and drink while sitting in a circle (ἐν κύκλῳ), but—strangely to the Greek eye—there is always a 'chorus leader' in their circles (we shall return to this important point later on). Unlike the Greeks, the Celts are served their drinks in both directions: not only 'from left to right', but also 'from right to left'. One more sign of their strangeness, then, is the absence of a strict observance of the *epidexia* principle.[69]

In the same section of Athenaeus' work (153 a–b), we find more examples of non-Greek dining and drinking customs. According to Poseidonios (*FGrHist* 87 F 5 [= fr. 57 Edelstein–Kidd = 114 Theiler] and *FGrHist* 87 F 12 [= fr. 64 Edelstein–Kidd = 154 Theiler]),[70] the king alone reclines on a couch at Parthian dinner parties, while his fellow-diners sit on the ground below. The dominant position of the king is analogous to that of the leaders of the Celts, but more radical and even extreme, marked by humiliating offences inflicted by the monarch on the king's 'friends' during the banquet. The position of the king during the banquet implies, of course, that wine circulation is altogether lacking.

Slightly earlier in his work (151 a–e), Athenaeus abbreviates a passage from Xenophon's *Anabasis* (VII 3, 21–32) describing the *deipnon* and the symposion given by the Tracian king Seuthes.[71] True, this is a very peculiar banquet, held during a military campaign, but the depiction is meaningful insofar as what Xenophon, an eyewitness and important participant in the venue, grasped of the Tracian customs strikingly resembles Poseidonios' remarks about the Celts. First, although the description is not entirely clear on this issue,[72] it seems that there was no clear-cut separation between the dinner, with meat and bread served to the diners, and the time devoted to drinking. Secondly, the diners sat in a circle (just like the Celts in Poseidonios), but the king was given a privileged position and so were, to some extent, his foreign guests, who enjoyed special tables placed within

[69] As I. G. Kidd observes in his comm. *ad loc.* (Edelstein and Kidd 1989, 313), this is only logical, because the cup would naturally go to both the left and right of the 'leader', sitting in the middle of the ring, who was served before all others.

[70] For the hypothetical context of this difficult fragment, see Edelstein and Kidd (1989) 303–305, as well as comm. *ad loc.* Theiler (1982) vol. II, p. 103–104.

[71] For the *Realien* involved (with pertinent secondary literature), cf. Lendle (1995) 439–444 and Stronk (1995) 208–214.

[72] Cf. esp. VII 3, 24–26.

their reach. The banquet was wholly asymmetrical, so to say. Furthermore, the king (joined by some notable guests) was supposed to distribute pieces of bread and meat 'to whomever he wished'. Next, the wine was 'passed around' in drinking horns, instead of wine cups, which were given to each guest of Seuthes, so the vessel did not circulate around the drinking company, but in smaller circles of guests sharing their neighbouring tables.[73] Importantly, the toasts were made standing up,[74] and involved lavish gifts for the king from his subjects and guests.[75] Incidentally, the 'artistic program' of the venue did not feature performing diners, but specialized musicians and buffoons.[76] Lastly, the banquet was over by sunset.[77]

In short, all the essential characteristics of the symposion (separation between eating and drinking, nocturnal banqueting, equality of the diners enabling competition, entertainment without any direct bearing on external socio-political hierarchies and constellations of power, and literary performances by the symposiasts) are not only absent but inverted, suiting a completely different type of banquet and expressing a set of socio-political ideals alien to the Greeks. What is conspicuously absent is, yet again, the circulation of the wine-cup round the dining-hall.

For my present purpose, it is not crucially important whether the peoples whose customs are adduced in Book IV of Athenaeus actually observed every detail of the rules of dining and drinking as described by Kritias, Xenophon, and Poseidonios. What is significant is the fact that Greek authors select from varying customs and texts a rather coherent set of contrasts with the practices and ideals of the Greek symposion. In the next section, we shall also see that there are arguably historical examples of such meaningful reversals in some peculiar cases of Greek conviviality.

[73] In VII 3, 24, we might, alternatively, understand that each guest is given his own drinking horn. If this is the case, there would be no circulation of wine whatsoever. But see VII 3, 29.

[74] See VII 3, 29 and 32.

[75] For this, see Stronk (1995) on VII 3, 26–27.

[76] The brief performance by the host (VII 3, 33) seems an exceptional display of his military skills. In general, cf. Stronk (1995) on VII 3, 32–33.

[77] This is of course partly due to the need for the army to post sentinels (VII 3, 34), but the closing ceremony seems to have been performed earlier (VII 3, 32), with the artistic part of the banquet to follow and complete the gathering. Xenophon writes as if he thought it was customary for the Thracians not to dine or drink all night through.

2.2.2 The Drinking Contest of the Anthesteria Festival in Athens

The Athenian festival of Anthesteria has a direct bearing on our general interpretation of the symposion. The story of the origins of the *Pithoigia* ('Pot-opening') festival, at the opening of casks of new wine on the first day of the Anthesteria,[78] may be regarded as something close to an aetiology of the symposion. It recounts the meeting between Dionysus and the king Amphiktyon, who is instructed by the god in how to drink diluted wine and perform the libation of undiluted wine in honour of the Good Divinity (*Agathos Theos*).

Even more important for my present purpose is the second day of the festival, the feast of Pitchers (*Choes*).[79] It featured a contest in the ritual drinking of the new wine that looks remarkable when compared with normal Greek drinking habits.[80] Hence the need for an aetiological legend explaining the strange custom.[81] After the killing of his mother, Orestes comes to Athens seeking a ritual cleansing of his *miasma*. It so happens that he arrives just when the Athenian king (Pandion or Demophon, depending on the version of the myth) is preparing a public ritual of Dionysus Limnaeus. The king is reluctant to chase away his guest-friend and suppliant, and yet he rightly fears

[78] See Philochoros, *FGrHist* 328 F 5; cf. Phanodemos, *FGrHist* 325 F 12, with Bravo (1997) 85–91, on both passages.

[79] Recently, see esp. Bremmer (1994) 46–50; Humphreys (2004) esp. 223–275; Parker (2005) esp. 290–316. Cf. also Hamilton (1992) (with a catalogue of sources: p. 149–171). For earlier bibliography, see also Deubner (1932) 96–99; Van Hoorn (1951); Parke (1977) 107–120; Simon (1983) 92–99; Burkert (1983) esp. 213–226 (cf. now Bremmer 2010, 78–82). A fresh reappraisal of the character of the festival will be provided by Vayos Liapis (in preparation); I hereby thank the author for showing me his unfinished work.

[80] I do not think that my synchronic and rather 'static' argument, which follows, is deeply affected by the illuminating study by Humphreys (2004) 223–275, which strives to discover diachronic changes in the history, and in ancient perceptions of, the ritual of the Anthesteria. Ceremonial 'manipulations' (below) of the usual drinking customs on the day of *Choes* seem coherent and meaningful enough to guarantee, I believe, the historicity and the (relative) antiquity of this aspect of the ritual, although we must allow here for some secondary 'metamorphoses' too. Moreover, I assume that the ritual under scrutiny here was itself a product of an historical 'metamorphosis' of the kind (cf. below, p. 107 with n. 93).

[81] An alternative aetiology (related to the third day of the festival, the *Chytroi*), involving Deukalion and the myth of the flood, does not need to detain us here. Cf. briefly, Parker (2005) 376. For more on the problems of the reconstruction of the ritual of the *Chytroi* see Robertson (1993) 199–203.

the contagious pollution were he to accept Orestes as a fellow-feaster (sch vet Tr Ar. *Eq*. 95). Ultimately, he contrives the following solution: in order to prevent Orestes from drinking from the same *krater* as himself and the other banqueters, he orders that everybody be given a separate pitcher (ibid.: *ἕνα ἑκάστῳ τῶν κεκλημένων παρέθηκε χοῦν*). Promising a reward for the feaster who will drink up his pitcher of wine first, he stimulates fast drinking at the expense of the usual table talk.[82] Indeed, the most conspicuous characteristic of this ritual henceforward is that 'they feast in solitary fashion' (cf. Eratosthenes, *FGrHist* 241 F 16; *ap*. Athen. 276 c: *εὐωχοῦνται μὲν γὰρ κατ' ἰδίαν*) 'nibbling and drinking in silence' (Plut. *Quaest. conv*. 613 b: *σιωπῇ τρώγειν καὶ πίνειν κτλ*.).

Our earliest source for the legend is very explicit and hence highly revealing for our present purposes (Euripides, *Iph. Taur*. 947–960):[83]

> Now when I went there [i.e. to Athens—M.W.], at first not one of my guest-friends was willing to receive me, a man detested by the gods. And those who felt compunction provided me with guest fare at a table of my own, though under the same roof. They contrived for me to be unaddressed, in silence, so I might enjoy the feasting and drinking apart from them (ll. 951–52: *σιγῇ δ' ἐτεκτήναντ' ἀπρόσφθεγκτόν μ', ὅπως | δαιτός τ' ὀναίμην πώματός τ' αὐτῶν δίχα*). Each filled a private pitcher with an equal measure of Bacchus, and took his pleasure. For my part, I did not presume to challenge them, but suffered in silence and pretended to ignore it, sighing deeply because I was my mother's killer. I have heard the Athenians made a ritual from my misfortunes, and that Pallas's people still have the custom of honouring the three-quart pitcher (958–60).

[82] Cf. also sch Ar. *Ach*. 961 (Apollodoros, *FGrHist* 244 F 133), Plut. *Quaest. conv*. 613 b–c; 642 b–c, and, more extensively, Athen. 437 c–d (citing Phanodemos, *FGrHist* 325 F 11). As we remember, 'sport drinking', or *polyposia*, may be an important element of the symposion, but the sympotic competition always runs 'to the right'. At any rate, Diog. Laert. (IV 8; cf. Timaeus, *FGrHist* 522 F 158 a–b) calls the ritual drinking competition of the day of Choes, *polyposia* (in the times of the philosopher Xenocrates, the prize, no doubt an additional one offered by Dionysius II of Syracuse, being a golden crown). Cf. Ar. *Ach*. 1000–1003 with 1202, where the prize is a wineskin. In Phanodemos, *FGrHist* 325 F 11, we have a cake as prize of the contest.

[83] I follow here the commentary and translation by M. J. Cropp (2000). For a brief comment on the 'transformations' of the ritual as implied by this passage (and perhaps by a well-known chorus in Ar. *Ran*. 209–219), see Humphreys (2004) 249 with n. 66. V. Liapis (in preparation) rightly stresses the traditional character of the Euripidean version of this *aition* as compared with Aeschylus' rendering of the episode (in *Eum*. 445–452).

Let me recapitulate a few strange features of this custom, as emphasized and explained by the myth in its various versions. First of all, though Orestes and the participants of the Feast of Pitchers henceforth share the fundamental 'community of the same roof', the ritual breach involves their fellowship of table (i.e. of food) and *krater* (i.e. of their wine). And secondly, the ritual is marked by a conspicuous absence of the communion of *logoi*, utterances normally exchanged among the feasters.

As is natural for a festival of the new wine,[84] our sources focus on the missing fellowship of wine (*krater* or cup) and its concomitant fellowship of *logoi*. Each feaster, sitting separately in total silence, holds a separate vessel and drinks large quantities of wine directly from a beaker (*chous*)[85] at the sign of a military trumpet (*salpinx*) and as quickly as possible.[86] An interesting fragment of Phanodemos helps us to better understand the meaning of the ritual (*FGrHist* 325 F 11; *ap.* Athen. 437 c *ad fin.*, tr. R. Parker):[87] 'And he [*sc.* the king—M.W.] instructed them, on finishing drinking, not to take the crowns they were wearing to the temples, because they had been under the same roof as Orestes, but to put them each around his own beaker and take the crowns to the priestess at the shrine in the marshes, and then sacrifice the remnants in the shrine'. What is at stake is not just the temporary exclusion of the merry atmosphere of the banquet as symbolized by wreaths, but also the suppression of the regular sympotic *kōmos*, a cheerful procession of the diners that at times rather violently rounded off the banquet. Instead, the contest was most probably followed by another kind of *kōmos*, featuring 'jests from the wagons' (*τὰ ἐκ τῶν ἁμαξῶν σκώμματα*), i.e. another type of (non-sympotic) jibes. It was a public ritual analogous to the *aischrologiai*, or ceremonial obscenities,

[84] In general, cf. Noel (1999) esp. 135–140; Robertson (1993). One of the problems involved in reconstructing the day of *Choes* is the question of the mutual relationship between centralized public rites (held in Thesmotheteion?) and private rituals organized all over Attica (in general, cf. Parker 2005, 292–294). Humphreys (2004) 245–246, argues against the existence of a centralized drinking contest in the fifth century. For my present purpose, this issue is of secondary importance.

[85] i.e. (up to) *c.*3.28 litres, but no doubt much less than the regular 1 *chous*. *Pace* Parker (2005) 313, the mere drinking of such a quantity of wine was not an anti-sympotic element of the festival, since *polyposia*, the 'sport drinking', was a normal sympotic game, although this is no doubt its radical version.

[86] Cf. Ar. *Ach.* 1000–1002.

[87] Cf. Parker (2005) 293, with relevant notes, for the problems of interpretation with this fragment. Cf. also F. Jacoby's (*FGrHist* 325 F 11) comm. *ad loc.*

one encounters at the Eleusinian and the Lenaean festivals (cf. *Suda*, *s.v. ta ek tōn hamaxōn skōmmata* [T 19 Adler]). Not unimportantly, both the drinking *agōn* and the peculiar *kōmos* took place in daylight and in public.

Students of Greek religion have long seen that 'drinking the new wine fulfils the function of a sacrificial meal, consecrated as something bizarre, a disastrous inversion of the norm, on this day when the normal order is inverted' (Burkert 1983, 223–224).[88] 'This was the complete antithesis of the symposium with its sharing of talk or song' (Parke 1977, 113).[89] As H. W. Parke once observed, the legend implies that before Orestes' arrival, 'the feast was conducted like any ordinary Greek banquet' (Parke 1977, 114), but after that it was organized as a purposeful inversion of usual sympotic customs.[90] Whatever the case may be, the contest of the Feast of Pitchers does look like an intentional negation of the symposion, and it is particularly important to realize that what was in fact being broken—or inverted—were fundamental sympotic principles.

The way to assure this goal was rather simple. It was enough to break the circulation of wine 'to the right', automatically stopping the exchange of toasts, songs, table talk, and all the forms of sympotic competition usually proceeding *epidexia*. Technically, what was suppressed was the circulation of the cup itself: the feasters were therefore supposed to drink in an inconvenient and inelegant way,[91] gulping wine

[88] Cf. also Noel (1999) 135–140 and *passim*, with a rather speculative interpretation of this festival as anti-symposion.

[89] Cf. already Plut. *Quaest. conv.* 613 b–c and 642 b–c.

[90] Cf. Parker (2005) 313. *Pace* Burkert (1983) 219, I would not attach too much importance to the fact that in Ar. *Ach.* 1085–1093 we learn of 'a dinner' (*deipnon*) in the afternoon, following Dikaiopolis's drinking contest. The catalogue of dinner arrangements (*klinai*, tables, cushions, bed-cloths, garlands, perfumes, sweets, prostitutes, several varieties of cakes, female dancers, and finally convivial songs) points to an ideal symposion. An imaginary symposion, it must be added, and not necessarily a customary stage of the festival.

[91] This, itself, was perhaps typical of the *polyposia* contests (see above, pp. 42–47). This time, however, contestants drink directly from a pitcher, without the mediation of a cup (thus, e.g., Hamilton 1992, 114–115), which is a radical development of the sympotic practice, although drinking from unsuitable vessels could happen also at symposia (cf. esp. the *psyktēr* in Pl. *Symp*. 214 e). In vase painting, on the one hand, 'games of equilibrium' might involve drinking directly from an *oinochoē* (e.g. the aforementioned *kylix* by Epiktetos [The Beazley Archive, no. 352425], above, pp. 46–47). On the other hand, on some images of wild *kōmoi*, the komasts can drink not only from a jug but also from an amphora or even from a *krater* (e.g. thus probably *ARV*^{2} 113/4 = The Beazley Archive, no. 200961: National Museum in Warsaw 198514).

directly from their individual wine jugs. The result was an atomized group still sharing the cultic meal, but no longer forming a community of fellow-feasters animated with the competitive and simultaneously egalitarian spirit they usually shared. Nothing can be further removed from the sympotic ideal than solitary fast drinking in silence.[92]

I would argue that the logic of the drinking contest of the Feast of Pitchers is an extreme case of a wholesale inversion of the principles of the symposion. For whatever reason, the Athenians decided to adopt this practice in order to achieve a symbolic goal related to the substance of the festival of Anthesteria, conceived in terms of a general reversal of normal patterns of behaviour.[93] This is all the more striking considering the aforementioned aetiological story, told on the first day of the Athesteria, of the 'first symposion' of Dionysus and the Athenian king Amphiktyon.

* * *

As we shall see shortly, there are other cases in which we should seriously consider the possibility of an intentional ritual negation, or reversal, of the symposion. In particular, I am thinking of what our sources say about Spartan and, to a lesser extent, Cretan drinking customs. However, in what follows I will not touch upon the vexed question of the *andreia, phiditia, syssitia* (or *syssitiai*) in the wider context of Spartan and Cretan socio-political structures.[94] Nor will I dwell on diverse hypotheses regarding the origins and mutual relationship of the two (hypothetical) systems—links that were already recognized in Antiquity.[95] Rather, I will first focus on their

[92] The anti-sympotic, so to say, logic we find in the literary sources seems interestingly paralleled by the one detected in the iconography of the *choes* by Hamilton (1992) 113–115.

[93] In general, Humphreys (2004) 270–271; cf. also Bravo (1997) 119–122, on the *pannychis* combined with the symposion interpreted as 'trasgressione regolata di regole'. The 'anti-sympotic' festival of *Choes* is attested in the second half of the fifth century at the latest (Ar. *Ach.* in 435 BC and Eur. *I.T.* *c.*414–412 BC). It may look reductionistic to take this 'inversion' as an anti-aristocratic ploy, and hence to associate it with, say, the Peisistratean, or later and democratic, manipulations of the cult of Dionysus in Athens. The point remains, however, that the obligatory silence and the abolition of drinking 'in a circle' actually eliminated the (arch-aristocratic) rule of admission to the drinking party based on the cultural (poetic, rhetorical, etc.) competences of a diner.

[94] For a sober and persuasive view of Spartan convivial customs, cf. briefly Bowie (1990) 225 n. 16.

[95] For a comparison between the Spartan and the Cretan communal dining see recently Nafissi (1991) esp. 191–206, as well as Wallace (2010) 384–385 and 388–390.

organization in strictly convivial terms, and then turn to their relationship with the ceremony of the symposion.

At this juncture, it should be stressed that although I am interested in the historical convivial phenomena, not simply the imagined ones as in one of the previous sections (2.2.1), I focus of necessity on the literary sources at our disposal. Both for Sparta and Crete, scholars have thus far not been successful in correlating such testimonies with the archaeological record—with neither the architectural nor ceramic remains of public messes (or communal dining).[96] Moreover, the literary sources were almost exclusively composed by outsiders and written, at least in part, after the Spartan and Cretan customs under scrutiny had long died out.

We could perhaps go a little further with an historical interpretation of the Spartan public conviviality. As for Crete, the very notion of 'archaic Cretan conviviality' may be debatable, as it is difficult to assume a high degree of uniformity amongst all the Doric communities on the island in the archaic period.[97] For my present purpose, it is enough to assume, in the first place, that some Cretan communities did try to distance themselves from the sympotic habits and, secondly, that some Greek writers of the classical and Hellenistic period were struck by the originality of certain local customs when compared with regular Greek drinking manners.[98]

2.2.3 *Andreia*, Cretan Public Messes

In his Book X, Strabo (4, 16–22 [C. 480–C. 484] = *FGrHist*. 70 F 149, esp. § 20–21)[99] quotes Ephorus on the most important provisions of 'the constitution of the Cretans'. Scholars used to comment on this passage (esp. Strabo, X 4, 20 [C. 483]) alongside a fragment of

[96] On the Cretan system, see briefly Wallace (2010) 385–387. For Sparta, see however below, nn. 109 and 124.

[97] In general, cf. Erickson (2011).

[98] But cf. below, 5.4.3, for my interpretation of some eighth-century Cretan archaeological phenomena (elaborating on Kotsonas 2011).

[99] With F. Jacoby's comm. *ad loc*.

[100] See now *BNJ* 458 F 2, with a detailed comm. *ad loc*. by L. Bertelli and rightly sceptical remarks by Erickson (2011) 381–383, as to the historical validity of this account for the archaic period and especially as to the possibility of correlating literary accounts with archaeological data. Cf. also Arist. *Pol*. II 1271 a 2–4 and 12–21, as well as Heracleides Lembos, fr. 15 Dilts (= fr. 611, 15 Rose, p. 374).

Dosiadas' (of Cydonia? third century BC?) *Krētika* (*FGrHist* 458 F 2;[100] *ap.* Athen. IV 143 a–f), the fullest treatment of Cretan public messes, and rounded off by Athenaeus (143 e–f) in a partially corrupted fragment of Pyrgion's (Hellenistic) book on *Cretan Customs* (*FGrHist* 467 F 1). The moral and social concerns behind the idealizing vision of the intentions of 'the Lawgiver'—much in the same vein as those ascribed to 'Lycurgus' as regards the Spartan public messes—reflect the socio-political problems of the late classical and Hellenistic epoch. This notwithstanding, the details of the ceremony of the Cretan *andreia* (lit. 'men's groups', the term being synonymous with *hetaireia*) seem rather consistent in our sources.[101]

The spatial organization of the banquets in question was very peculiar. Instead of reclining, the banqueters were seated and their stools or chairs surrounded a few common tables, with a certain number of chairs reserved for guests. In addition, there were two separate 'guest-tables' (*trapezai xenikai* in Dosiadas), or a special 'third table' devoted to Zeus Xenios or called simply *xenia* [*sc. trapeza*] (Pyrgion). All citizens assembled in the *andreion*, the mess-house, are given the same share of food, except for youngsters, who receive a half share, are seated on the ground, and are there in part to serve the other diners (Ephorus). 'Then a cup of heavily diluted wine is set on each table, and everyone who shares a table drinks from this in common; after they eat, another cup is served' (Athen. 143 c–d; tr. S. D. Olson). Only elderly people are permitted to drink more (at will?), whereas just one *krater* of wine is served for all the youngsters. At some point, there is a special performance by the lady in charge of the mess: the best share of the food is removed from the tables and ostentatiously given to those who have distinguished themselves in war or through their wisdom. After this *deipnon*, they discuss public matters, then recall great deeds of war and praise good men of old.

Ephorus' report about the 'troops' (*agelai*) of Cretan youths, sharing the same public mess and ritually battling both within the group and between members of different 'troops', is notoriously vague (Strabo, X 4, 20 = C. 483). Nonetheless, there is no doubt about the highly functional character of the Cretan feasts. A famous love-gift received by a boy from his lover at the end of the period of

[101] See in particular Lavrencic (1988) (with n. 1, conveniently listing earlier studies on the issue) and Talamo (1987). In general, for the Cretan *andreia* and *hetaireiai* cf. (badly out of date, though) Willetts (1955) esp. 18–27. Cf. briefly Bremmer (1994) 44–45.

his ritual abduction (Strabo, X 4, 21 = C. 483) contained an ox (to be sacrificed to Zeus and then provided for the initiatory banquet), a military habit (*stolē polemikē*) and a drinking cup (*potērion*).[102] The link between war and banquets in the process of socializing youth cannot be doubted.[103] The same is true of the strictly observed themes of communal talks and of the 'gift of honour' that highlights social hierarchies during the banquet—all of which contrast noticeably with sympotic habits.

At this juncture, let me enumerate the divergences between the Cretan public messes and the symposion. First of all, in Crete there is no separation between the meal proper and the wine party. Next, we find a highly hierarchized banquet with both an *a priori* hierarchy based on age (adults, youths, old men, and guests receive different treatment in terms of their position at the table and their shares of food and drink) and additionally on the previous merits of individual diners. The latter sharply contrasts with the egalitarian atmosphere and changing ad hoc hierarchies of the symposion.

The very spatial organization of the banquet breaks the solidarity of the group into a series of small circles around each particular table—just like in the case of the Thracian banquet in Xenophon. The cup does not circulate round the dining-hall, each table having its own cup refilled only twice with highly diluted wine. The themes of table talk are predetermined and conventional in their patriotic and moralizing flavour. All in all, the harmony of wine and its accompanying pastimes disappears alongside the self-contained and, so to say, socially disinterested banquet of peers.

It is worthwhile stressing that all this is achieved not only through the hierarchy of the diners and by limiting wine drinking, but also by abolishing the sympotic rule of circulating cups.

[102] On the role of *paiderasteia* in the Cretan system of education see recently Link (2000) and Powell (2002) esp. 94–96 as well as Ducat (2006) esp. 164–168.

[103] Cf. Murray (1991).

[104] Despite the variegated and problematic terminology of the Spartan public messes (*pheidition, andreion, syskēnion, syssition*), henceforth I shall only use the most general of those terms, *syssition*. In general, for the Spartan institutions of the

2.2.4 Spartan *Syssitia*, Xenophanes' Symposion, and the Banquets of Cleomenes III

From this perspective, the case of the Spartan public messes can be equally instructive.[104] In this case, however, our sources for Spartan conviviality are mixed with the voices of ancient moral thinkers explicitly or implicitly (at times perhaps even unconsciously) referring to Spartan customs.[105] According to Xenophon (*Lac.* 5, 2–4),[106] the first and the most important novelty introduced by Lycurgus was his decision to make previously private feasts (*syskēnia*) public, but the supplementary and more radical measure was to abolish compulsory drinking (τὰς ἀναγκαίας πόσεις); hereafter, everybody would

archaic period, see Hodkinson (1997) with a discussion of the problem of the cognizability of the archaic history of Sparta (Hodkinson 1997, 83–87). Lupi (2007) esp. 378–379, gives a good introduction to archaic Sparta, including the problem of the sixth-century 'Spartan revolution'.

[105] Bielschowsky (1869) esp. 2–9, remains an important study of the Spartan public messes; cf. also Nilsson (1952) [1912], esp. 836–849. Recently, see in particular Nafissi (1991) 173–226; Lavrencic (1993); Meier (1998) 170–183 and 216–221; Rabinowitz (2000); Hodkinson (2002), 115–119; cf. Senff (1990) and Quattrocelli (2002). Hodkinson (1998), Powell (1998), and Scott (2010) deal with the historical problem of the 'Spartan austerity' as a conceivable effect of the social changes in the course of the sixth century BC (see already Stubbs 1950). One important aspect of this 'austerity' might have been the downfall of the Laconian black-figured pottery, which most probably had served aristocratic symposia (cf. below, n. 109 and 124; *contra*: Rabinowitz 2000, 123–124).

[106] For a commentary to Xenophon's discussion of Spartan conviviality, see Rebenich (1998) 107–112 and 141–142, as well as Lipka (2002) esp. 148–157 and 240–245.

[107] For 'drinking at will' (as in Pl. *Symp.* 176 e) see above, pp. 87–88 with relevant notes. However, as Murray (1991) 91, points out, Spartan banquets 'were not oblivious to the pleasures of alcohol'.

[108] Let us note that abolishing the '*epidexia* rule' implies the presence of numerous cup-bearers (most probably helots), each of them serving one particular feaster, i.e. his master (cf. Kritias, DK 88 B 33 = *FGrHist* 338A F 10; on this fragment see above, pp. 98–99 and below, pp. 306–308). It is worthwhile that although the Spartan *syssitia* discard the custom of cup circulation, they retain the habit of reclining while feasting. In general, cf. below, 2.3.1.

[109] If we were to accept the hypothesis of replacing pre-existing symposia by *syssitia* in archaic Sparta (see below), it might have some important consequences for our view of the life-style of the Spartan élite, but also for some aspects of the history of the Laconian economy. Assuming that Laconian pottery served also the needs of the local 'convivial élite' (although this pottery was widely exported to Samos, Tarent, and Cyrene), it is worthwhile thinking about the conceivable differences in the ways such cups might have been used at banquets with and without the '*epidexia* principle'. When passed around from one diner to another, the images or inscriptions

drink at will and without constraint.[107] And this is exactly what Kritias (fr. 6 W^2, ll. 1–4) had in mind when he alluded to the most pronounced peculiarity of the Spartan banquet.[108] With respect to the portrait this study has developed, his crucial decision to ban the circulation of the wine-cup *epidexia* was of particular importance.[109] Moreover, with the premeditated mixing of age groups, Lycurgus broke down the solidarity of the peers during the banquet (5, 5). Paradoxically enough, the feast of the Spartan 'equals' (*homoioi*) is a highly hierarchical occasion.[110] To eliminate *hybris*, drunken uproar, and indecent talk, Spartan custom forces the feasters to talk about great deeds serving the public good (5, 6). Finally, the ban on the use of torches for the return home of banqueters—applying only to men of military age—makes it certain that they will drink moderately (5, 7).

It is most remarkable that Xenophanes of Colophon also fiercely recommends the last two measures in his fr. B 1 W^2. He encourages drinking that will still permit a feaster to go home without any help, 'unless you are very old' (l. 18). In both cases, what is implied is the abolition of the drunken *kōmos* of young feasters, which evidently required some light, or even a great deal of light, to be pleasant, i.e. to be spectacular and safe for its participants (cf. Xen. *Lac.* 5, 7).[111] Implicitly, this measure is intended to minimize the time span assigned to the nocturnal banquet by moderate drinking with the return in darkness constantly on the banqueters' minds. Another thing is Xenophanes' idea of strictly determining the themes 'decent' enough for table talk during his ideal banquet (ll. 19–24). All in all,

on the vessel would form an important part of the convivial entertainment, generating jokes, table talk, etc. For this, the specific tastes and competences of the diners were needed—unlike in the case when everyone keeps his own cup for himself. In the latter situation, the subtly painted ceramics lose much of their appeal. Henceforward, non-decorated, plain glazed cups would be a striking testimony to 'Spartan austerity' (see also below, 5.4.3, on early black-glazed Cretan pottery). Additionally, Scott (2010) 172–173, rightly claims that individual ownership of a lavishly decorated cup might have been an important sign of prestigious display for richer Spartiates.

[110] Also based on the 'parts of honour', i.e. double shares of food and drink, assigned to the kings and freshly nominated members of *gerousia*; cf. Hdt. VI 57,1; Xen. *Lac.* 15,4; *Agesilaos*, 5,1; Plut. *Lyc.* 26,8). Cf. also below, n. 113 (on Spartan *epaikla*) and my remarks on Persaios, *FGrHist* 584 F 2. In general, for the inequalities involved in Spartan banquets, see Fisher (1989) 35–36.

[111] Abolishing the *kōmos* is the most emblematic of the Spartan (good) attitudes to wine that comes to the mind of Plato's character Megillos, the Spartan, in the *Laws* (I 637 a–b). In general, cf. David (1978).

[112] See above, p. 73 with n. 190.

Xenophanes' symposion, which I would argue was at least partly inspired by the Spartan messes (in its turn inspiring Plato's ideals in the *Laws*), is no symposion at all; in fact, it is an anti-symposion conceived by a radically moralizing thinker.[112]

In Dicaearchus' *Tristatesman*, messily quoted by Athenaeus (141 a–c = fr. 72 Wehrli), the most intriguing fact about the Spartan messes is that 'the dinner is initially served to each man separately, and nothing is shared with anyone else (. . . *πρὸς ἕτερον κοινωνίαν οὐδεμίαν ἔχον*); ' . . . , a cup (*kōthōn*) is set beside each man to drink from whenever he wishes' (tr. S. D. Olson).[113] And once again, the crucial anti-sympotic measure is to break down the circle of wine, talk, and other sympotic pastimes normally passed around the dining room.

In his *Constitution of the Lacedaemonians*, the Stoic philosopher Persaios (fr. 454 von Arnim [*SVF* I, p. 101] = *FGrHist* 584 F 2; *ap.* Athen. 140 f–141 a) observes that the Spartan *syssition* 'is organised like a small state (*politeuma*); because if someone is required to recline first or second, or to sit on the stool, they use the same arrangement for the *epaikla*' (tr. S. D. Olson, slightly modified). Thus, the strict hierarchy of the diners is yet another trait of the public messes in Sparta.[114]

Since the relevant passages of Plutarch's *Life of Lycurgus* (10–12) mostly dwell on the moral and educational value of the Spartan public messes for the edification of Spartan youth, we do not find too much there about the convivial organization of the *syssitia*. What we get from Plutarch is a very special treatment of the issue of sympotic *logoi* (12, 6–7). First, like so many authors before him, he focuses on the themes of table talk, above all on political matters, which were

[113] Up to a certain point everybody is served an equal share of food of some variety. This equality disappears in the part of the banquet called the *Epaikla*. (*Aiklon* is a Dorian equivalent of *deipnon*, so it would be fair to translate *epaiklon* as 'Nachtisch', as F. Jacoby in his comm. *ad* Persaios, *FGrHist* 584 F 2), when diverse types of food were brought to the mess by its members and 'passed around' (*peripheretai*) once the diners have quickly eaten their usual portions. For the difference between *cena propria* and *epaeclon*, cf. Bielschowsky (1869) 18–20. For the prestigious procedure of announcing the 'benefactor' providing the *epaiklon*, see esp. Molpis, *FGrHist* 590 F 2c (*ap.* Athen. 141 d–e) and Persaios, *FGrHist* 584 F 2 as well as Athen. IV 139 c (referring briefly to Polemon). Recently, for the food of the Spartan public messes, see in detail Gallo (1993) esp. 184–187.

[114] This hierarchy contrasts once again with the egalitarian order of the symposion, on which see above, p. 36 with notes and in general 1.3.2.

[115] See above, pp. 50–53.

perfectly suited to promote Spartan education. Another issue is the very peculiar training of Spartan youth with respect to *skōmmata*, 'jibes', normally rather violent sympotic jests.[115] They are encouraged both to jest without scurrility and to endure mocking without displeasure. The important thing is that the jesting feaster is supposed to stop at once when his 'victim' asks him to cease.[116] As if to make up for these limitations, the ruthless humiliation of helots seems to have been institutionalized during the Spartan banquets.[117]

There are other measures in Plutarch dealing with issues critical to the common forms of sympotic entertainment. Each entering feaster is reminded by the eldest member of the company about the first commandment of sympotic loyalty: 'Through this door no word goes forth outside' (12, 5, tr. B. Perrin).[118] And then there is the associated rule of strict unanimity required for admitting a new member to the company of diners (12, 5–6).[119] Plutarch ends in a standard manner: the Spartans drink only moderately, for they know they will go home without a light (12, 7)—again, a motif we find in a number of sources.

There is one more interesting passage in Athenaeus, referring to a fragment in Phylarchus's *Histories* (Athen. 142 c-f = *FGrHist*. 81 F 44)[120] on the degradation of Spartan conviviality and the appearance of lavish banquets shortly before the reign of Cleomenes III (i.e. shortly before *c*.235 BC). According to this, Spartan nobles had become addicted to typical sympotic luxuries, while the king organized his own sober and conservative banquets in his private circle. For these, only five couches were prepared (accommodating ten participants at most), the banquet never started before the customary hour,

[116] This was a generally admitted sympotic ideal (cf. *Adesp. eleg.* 27 W^2, on which see above, p. 73), most probably rarely observed during real-life symposia.

[117] Plut. *Lyc.* 28,9 mentions the custom of intoxicating helots with great amounts of unmixed wine to bring them to the *syssitia* and make them perform rude songs and coarse dances. This is how the Spartans taught their youth to avoid excessive wine drinking. See Fisher (1989) 34 and 43; cf. David (1989) 5–7; Ducat (1974) esp. 1454–1458. Fisher (1989) 34, perhaps rightly, takes an anecdote (in Plut. *Lak. Apophth.* 232 f–233 a) about some Chian guests permitted to defecate during a *deipnon* in the Spartan Ephoreion as implying an analogous attitude towards foreigners as well.

[118] In general, cf. Rösler (1995).

[119] On the meaning of this elitist practice see Hodkinson (2002) 116–117 with n. 29. The issue of the admission of new members to the Spartan *syssitia* has been discussed by Ducat (2006) 93–94. Singor (2009) has tried to elaborate a (partly demographic) model of the renewal of the *syssitia*, discarding the ancient testimonies of the voting procedure. This hypothesis does not seem persuasive to me.

[120] Cf. Plut. *Cleomenes* 13.

and wine was served very sparingly. But the most intriguing measure concerned the overall organization of the entertainment. A cup of wine was set before every feaster, filled only at his explicit request and refilled only twice after the *deipnon*. There was no musical entertainment (*akroama*), and table talk was suppressed and subject to the king's will. He talked to each of his guests, specifically asking this or that diner to say or to listen to something. And what is certain—although Cleomenes' knowledge of the detailed ceremonial and ideological meaning of Spartan public messes might have been sketchy—is that the organization of his banquets at least bears witness to the way the reversal of a luxurious symposion was thought of in the third century BC.[121] Again, the crucial thing was to curb the circulation of wine and conversation within the dining-hall. And this detail, as we have seen above, surely draws on an earlier Spartan tradition.

* * *

In the last century, scholars were addicted to the idea of seeking 'remnants' of old Indo-European customs and institutions in Spartan forms of conviviality—and accordingly developed various evolutionary models of Greek conviviality.[122] Meanwhile, our ancient authorities—from Xenophon (*Lac.* 5, 2) to Plutarch (in *Lyc.* 10, 1)—consistently present the 'Lycurgan' reform of Spartan drinking habits as an obvious anti-sympotic novelty. 'The Lawgiver' attacks the demoralizing sympotic customs and uses them to achieve his moral and pragmatic goal. And this interpretation looks more plausible than the modern constructions, especially when one considers the institutional logic of the public messes in Sparta.

In a particularly valuable paper, Adam Rabinowitz (Rabinowitz 2000, 114) rightly warns scholars, who are increasingly aware of 'the danger of projecting Classical Spartan institutions into the distant past' (ibid.), against the danger of confronting the Spartan *syssition*

[121] I will not touch here upon the problem of Hellenistic sumptuary theories or legislation, such as those of Demetrius of Phaleron in Athens; for this, see, e.g. Gallo (1993) 194–199 and Gehrke (1978) esp. 162–170.

[122] See e.g.. Nilsson (1952) [1912], esp. 841–849 and Jeanmaire (1939) 463–591, esp. 482–484. Cf. also Gschnitzer (1981) esp. 98–99. In a similar vein, see recently Meier (1998) 177–183, suggesting a historical link between the *syssitia* and secret male associations of earlier times. For similar implications of O. Murray's theory (in particular Murray 1991), see above, pp. 3–4. In general, see the interesting remarks by Hodkinson (1997) 89–92 and Lupi (2002).

[123] See above, Section 0.2.

with an anachronistically immutable picture of the symposion. In my introduction, I have already defended the idea that it is possible to conceptualize a historically pertinent model of the symposion.[123] In this section, I will not commit myself to the idea that Spartan *syssitia* were actually modelled on the aristocratic symposion, although such a hypothesis looks plausible in mere chronological terms.[124] My point is that Spartan conviviality was conceived, construed, or, perhaps more helpfully, constructed, by classical and early Hellenistic authors, with reference to the essentials of the symposion and, therefore, we may use the main aspects of this conscious opposition as guiding premises in our definition of the symposion. This is to say that the image of the Spartan public messes in our sources might be telling us more about the *symposia* than about the *syssitia*.

That having been said, if we were to accept the idea that Spartan *syssitia* actually played with idiosyncratic formal characteristics of the symposion, we should conclude that in sixth (or late seventh) century Sparta, the symposion was put to a very perverse use—much like the ritual reversal of the symposion in the Athenian festival of the Anthesteria. In other words, I think that the recently popular notion of the *syssitia*, according to which it is a continuation of the tradition

[124] A growing number of scholars seem to have come nowadays to a similar conclusion. See e.g. Nafissi (1991) and Fisher (1989) 36–38, on the contrast between the *syssition* and the symposion. Scott (2010) esp. 172–174, refers to the pottery finds from the acropolis of Halieis, destroyed (by the Argives?) *c.*590–580 BC (see Boyd & Jameson 1981, 327–328 and in general Jameson 1969, esp. 318–322 with Figure 3). Before the destruction, a Spartan garrison held its communal banquets there. According to A. Scott, the remaining pottery suggests that aristocratic customs were still observed in the early-sixth-century *syssitia* in Halieis. Elaborating on these analyses, I would suggest that after the change in Sparta's convivial habits, some élite circles tried to stick to their traditional lifestyle (the Spartan kings had the right to hold regular symposia even in later times: see Hdt VI 69,1–2, where a king's wife takes his late return from a banquet as a komast—drunk and crowned with garlands—for granted). A 'residual survival' of the symposion in some clusters of Spartan élites would explain the flourishing of the luxurious Laconian pottery until as late as *c.*530 BC (in a similar vein, Scott 2010, 176–177; Meier 1998, 216–217). As late as *c.*560 BC, traces of Spartan sympotic iconography can be found in Laconian toreutics (cf. e.g. Dontas 1969, for a bronze figurine of a komast from Corfu). In general, cf. Hodkinson (2009) on the survival of some aspects of the aristocratic ethos in Sparta.

[125] In general, see Murray (1983*a*), (1983*b*), (1983*c*), (1991), and in particular Murray (1993) [1978], 177; Nafissi (1991) e.g. p. 175; Hodkinson (1997) 90–91; Powell (1998) esp. 129–130; Meier (1998) 170–183 and 216–221; Rabinowitz (2000) 166; Scott (2010). Nafissi (1991) 175 and 225–226, rightly points out that we must postulate a historical link between the enlargement of the Spartan citizenry after the conquest of Messenia. If so, the analogy between the mechanisms of the rise of the

of privileged aristocratic drinking which expands the group enjoying the essentially sympotic lifestyle to all the Spartan 'equals', is not sufficient for grasping the nature of the changes that produced late archaic and classical Lacedaemonian public messes.[125] Rather than an institutionalized and generalized symposion, I would be tempted to view the *syssitia* as a fundamentally anti-sympotic phenomenon[126]—in much the same way as the majority of ancient writers reflecting on the subject did.

2.3 CONCLUSIONS: TOWARDS A NEW DEFINITION OF THE SYMPOSION

2.3.1 Symposion and the Reclining Party in Greek Sympotic Imagery

As I have already mentioned, it has been de rigueur to identify the symposion with a reclining banquet in the last few decades. Before turning to the earliest archaeological and literary testimonies of the Greek aristocratic banquet in the next chapter, it is indispensable to reconsider, if only for a moment, the way in which archaic and classical sympotic texts present the custom of reclining while drinking. Then, in concluding this chapter (Section 2.3.2), I would like to consider the possible social implications of an alternative 'tracer element' of the symposion that I have examined earlier in this chapter: the principle of the circulation of sympotic pastimes 'to the right'.

It is true that sympotic images in archaic and classical vase painting consistently show the symposiasts reclining—although, as we shall see in the next chapter, this imagery does not pre-date the start of the sixth century. I shall also argue that our earliest unambiguous literary

public messes in Sparta and the origins of the symposion would be unmistakable (see below, 6.4).

[126] The radical character of this change was rightly emphasized by Hodkinson (1997) 91; see also Meier (1998) 216–221. For A. Rabinowitz, who views both the *syssition* and the symposion principally in terms of 'communal practices' of the archaic *polis* and denies the strictly private dimension of the symposion, the Spartan reforms would not look as 'anti-sympotic' as in my theory, but would be 'an effort to recreate that timeless, stable commensal ideal' (Rabinowitz 2000, 166–167, quotation at p. 166).

[127] See e.g., famously, Xenophanes, fr. 13 G–P; cf. e.g. Alkman, fr. 19 Page–Davies (= 11 Calame; on this fragment see below, p. 161). Cf. also Athen. X 428 b, where the

testimonies to the habit of reclining while drinking are equally late and do not, in principle, pre-date the iconography in question. True, the association of reclining at a banquet with its relaxed and luxurious atmosphere seems almost obligatory,[127] but contrary to what one might expect, archaic poetry does not abound in such imagery. Moreover, as Athenaeus points out (428 b), the 'custom of sitting [at symposia—M.W.] remains to this day among some Greeks (ἔτι δὲ καὶ νῦν τοῦτο παραμένει παρ' ἐνίοις τῶν Ἑλλήνων)'.[128] And his contention is borne out by a fragment of Phocylides, quoted immediately before that (fr. 14 G—P; tr. Gulick): 'It behoves one at a symposion, as the cups go round and round, to sit and chat pleasantly while he drinks his wine (ἡδέα κωτίλλοντα καθήμενον οἰνοποτάζειν)'. First, it is important to note that this is a normative elegy describing the manner of drinking decently at a symposion, and what is more, the mention of both chatting and drinking makes it impossible for us to think that the poet had in mind young aristocrats (or some other 'subordinate' diners) for whom sitting during a banquet was customary.[129] This is not to say that Greeks did not regularly recline at their symposia because, beginning at some point in the late seventh century BC, they most certainly did. But it is worth noticing that, in sympotic imagery, an enjoyable and even normative banquet could do without reclining.[130]

When one turns to the images of the 'reversed' symposion, the situation becomes even more interesting. True, barbarian Celts and Thracians, as well as the members of the Cretan *andreia* and participants of the drinking contest during the *Anthesteria* festival, all drink in a seated position instead of reclining, which is what we might expect from these 'anti-symposia'. But it is not so in the case of the Spartan *syssitia*, nor in that of the Parthian royal banquets, for example. It seems to me that what was crucially important in the Greek vision of 'convivial Otherness', so to say, was not the

origins of custom of the reclining instead of sitting at banquet are explained as linked to the developing wantonness (*tryphē*) of the Greeks.

[128] What he means by 'to this day' is most probably not so much the realities of his own time, but what he read of the archaic and classical symposion. What is implied is Athenaeus' idea that, in times of old, all Greeks sat at their banquets in the manner of the Homeric heroes; cf. Athen. 11 f; 18 a; 363 f.

[129] See above, p. 34.

[130] But cf. Alkaios, fr. 376 L–P. Cf. also Pherekrates, fr. 183 K–A, for a seated *deipnon*. See below, pp. 161–163, on Kallinos, fr. 1 W^2, ll. 3–4.

obliteration of the custom of reclining, but the absence of some implications of this custom.

In this respect, the common denominator of the Celtic, Thracian, Parthian, Spartan, and Cretan banquets is a more or less conspicuous 'hierarchization' within the group of the feasters. At one extreme, we find the Oriental king reclining alone with his humiliated 'friends' dining on the ground; at the other, the ritually debased youth (and other 'subordinates' or 'outsiders') in Cretan public messes. But, if we take into account the logic of the Anthesteria competition, featuring something close to a radical equality of the diners, it becomes patent that there is a more general idea at play in this reversal. In the Anthesteria, in purely functional terms, the seated position of the feasters had a practical goal: they are supposed to drink their wine, and thus to put an end to this gathering quickly, their community being suppressed in mythical terms as well. And when we take notice of the fact that during the symposion not only adult male aristocrats, but also their accompanying *hetairai* reclined (with only youngsters sitting, in process of socialization into the sympotic lifestyle), we realize that what reclining was about was not only or primarily luxurious relaxation, but something more fundamental to the sympotic 'ideology'. It was about (momentary) equality and the fellowship of diners. To put things crudely, the point in reversing the symposion was not to abolish this custom, but to introduce a whole set of distinctions between the diners. Thus, Spartans recline at their *syssitia*, but they no longer do it in an egalitarian manner, since only the élite diners are permitted to do so. Other categories of participants are there precisely to emphasize the superiority of those who recline.[131]

From a different perspective, in the Greek *imaginaire*, reclining is not as fundamentally Greek as other characteristics of the symposion. Thus, Theopompus (*FGrHist* 115 F 39; *ap*. Athen. X 443 a) writes that

[131] Just as, in the well-known case of the Macedonian banquets (Hegesander, fr. 33, *FHG* IV 419; *ap*. Athen. 18 a): 'it was not the custom in Macedon for anyone to recline at dinner (ἐν δείπνῳ) unless he had speared a wild boar without using hunting-nets; until they did that, they ate sitting up' (tr. S. D. Olson). Slightly before quoting this passage, Athenaeus adduces a fragment by Duris of Samos (*FGrHist* 76 F 49) mentioning a feast held by Alexander the Great for six thousand of his officers, some of whom reclined alongside others dining in a seated position (more precisely, they were seated ἐπὶ δίφρων καὶ κλιντήρων). This clearly implies some hierarchy among the officer corps of the Macedonian army. For the banquets of Alexander, see above, p. 41 n. 88.

[132] In Aelian. *VH* III 15, the Illyrian habit of sitting when drinking is omitted altogether.

the Illyrians 'dine and drink seated', accompanied by their wives who are even permitted to pledge toasts to anyone present, but who also conduct their husbands home from symposia. In a word, I would argue, they play the (sympotic) role of *hetairai* or female servants.[132] On the other hand, according to Aristotle (fr. 607 Rose; *ap*. Athen. I 23 e;[133] tr. S. D. Olson), it is customary for the Etruscans to 'dine with their wives, lying down, under the same robe'.[134] Again, the custom of reclining while drinking is accessory, whereas what is distinctively Hellenic is the exclusion of wives from male drinking parties. And this brings me to other essentials of the symposion as yielded by Greek visions of the banquets of 'Others'.

When discussing the Homeric habits of banqueting, Athenaeus observes that 'Homer's characters feast sitting down' (11 f; tr. S. D. Olson).[135] This, however, is only one point to be made. Another custom seems as revealing to the erudite, namely the role of tables in Homeric commensality. In particular, we find a lengthy discussion devoted to what looks like a serious issue for Athenaeus and earlier commentators on Homer (11 f–12 c): Did the tables remain there beside the diners throughout the entire party, 'as is still the custom today among many uncivilized peoples (*barbaroi*)' (12 a; tr. Olson)? It is not difficult to guess why this was an important problem for Homeric erudition. If the heroes did retain the same tables during the entire party, it means that both the 'Ancients' (in Homer) and the 'barbarians' do not know the ceremony of 'second tables',[136] thus disregarding the separation between dining and drinking, emblematic of the civilized Hellenes.

* * *

In the cases I have been following earlier in this chapter, a consistent pattern emerges as regards the meaning of a series of 'reversals' of the symposion in Greek writers. All, or virtually all, our authorities seem to share an interest in several aspects of unusual or extraordinary banqueting. First, their respective rules either make the 'alien diners'

[133] Rose also includes in this fragment a variant from Heracleides Lembos (= fr. 611, 44 Rose, p. 379 = fr. 44 Dilts).

[134] For Roman habits in this respect, see, famously, Nepos, *prologus* 6: 'Contra ea pleraque nostris moribus sunt decora, quae apud illos [sc. in Graecia—MW] turpia putantur. Quem autem Romanorum pudet uxorem ducere in convivium?'

[135] Cf. above, n. 128. For my historical considerations regarding the Homeric banquets, see below, Chapter 4.

[136] Cf. above, p. 39 with n. 78.

conclude their banquets at sunset or invite them to moderate drinking, avoiding some equivalent of the Greek *kōmos*. The moderation and/or brevity of their drinking events is just the other side of the aforementioned non-observance of the separation between the time they eat and drink. Next, the diners either restrain themselves from performing or are confined in their verbal performances to specific functional themes and subjects, morally edifying and profitable for the members of their social group. Wild and unrestricted, provocative utterances, poems, or table talk aimed at one's peers and fellow-drinkers are thus forbidden or non-existent. This is fully logical, given that the rigorous ideological equality of the diners, essential to the Greek symposion, does not exist in the majority of the cases considered earlier in this chapter.

2.3.2 Defining the Symposion: The Circulating Cup and the Social Dynamics of the Aristocratic Banquet

In my next chapters, I will be pursuing the traces of the rise of the symposion in the earliest literary texts we possess and in archaeological material from the Early Iron Age and early archaic period. Current scholarly debates, based on abundant literary sources of a later date (above, 1.1–1.4), make it possible to compile a list of distinctive features of the symposion, i.e. of technical measures and organizational rules for the culture-oriented élite drinking bout. This catalogue can now be checked by studying the ways of 'reversing' or challenging this type of feast in Greek thought, that is by studying Greek 'anti-sympotic' imagery (above, 2.2). The definition we thus obtain will be many-sided and multidimensional, which in principle may be rewarding given the fact that both literary and archaeological sources—depending on their nature[137] and on the state of their preservation—can give us only a glimpse into the phenomena we examine. To simplify, the more constitutive features of the symposion we define, the better the chances are that we will find its traces in our random and patchy source-material.

However, viewing the matter in this way risks a lot. Only a conjunction of several important characteristics may allow us to assume the symposion's existence in the time and place of a given historical

[137] Namely on their genre conventions, in the case of our literary sources, and on social conventions that determine the use of diverse artefacts in ritual, and in particular in funerary, contexts.

source. But how many characteristics are required at the same time? And which idiosyncrasies are important enough to make us confident that we are indeed facing the symposion? In any such list, it would be reasonable to include only the most important 'tracer elements' of the symposion. I think it would also be worthwhile to distinguish its technical aspects from its system of values in any such list.

On a technical level, our 'short list' should include the following elements: (1) a clear division between eating and drinking, which necessitates (2) a long nocturnal occasion that favours drunken excesses. From this stems (3) the rigorous exclusion of the wives and daughters of diners and the emphasis on the diners' relationships with courtesans and young boys. The latter is the natural cause for the importance of eroticism in poetry and table talk, which is just one aspect of (4) the relaxed, but at the same time provocative, or even aggressive nature of convivial discourse, perceived as crucial to sympotic pastimes.

These technical characteristics of the symposion have something important in common. They all become fully understandable as adding to the 'carnivalesque' nature of the symposion, precisely when we view them as diverse aspects of the ritual breach or suspension of important social norms.[138]

In the sympotic ethos, one should stress two elements: (5) the importance of the notion of the rigorous equality of all the (full) members of the group and of their group solidarity, as well as (6) the omnipresent principle of competition that makes all the sympotic pastimes assume the form of a contest with clearly defined winners and losers. This gives rise to intra-group animosities, which, paradoxically amongst equals, is a complementary aspect of the symposion.

To me, this 'dialectical' tension between the ideal of equality and the principle of competition is a fundamental characteristic of the symposion,[139] somehow related to the 'carnivalesque' nature of the Greek aristocratic banquet.

* * *

[138] On the sympotic 'carnivalisation' see briefly above, p. 79. Cf. Bravo (1997) 119–122.

[139] Rabinowitz (2004) 183, writes that '[f]or the archaic period, at least, I would argue that the only drinking-parties that can be defined as "symposia" are those in which the ideology, if not the reality, of equality among the participants contrasts with the underlying tensions over power, wealth and status'. His remark, however, is rather general and most probably concerns real-life tensions between individual diners.

In this chapter, I explored the principle of doing things 'to the right', the principle that regulated almost all the sympotic pastimes and entertainments, whose circular movement round the dining hall followed the circulation of wine during a banquet. I have also observed that abolishing this rule formed an important feature of the 'anti-symposia' Greek authors ascribed to some 'barbarian' peoples, as well as to certain other Greek communities. A momentary suspension of the *epidexia* principle was likewise one of the constitutive elements of the ritual of *Choes* during the Athenian festival of Anthesteria. All of which points to the paramount importance of this principle for the Greek banquet—an importance thus far overlooked in the 'sympotic scholarship'. To fully understand this phenomenon, we first need to visualize the workings of this rule in the sympotic context and fathom its consequences for the socio-political dynamics of the sympotic group.

As we have seen in the previous chapter, almost all the sympotic competitions and games are organized in 'rounds' of performances or other activities executed by each diner in turn. Thus, at least ideally, a game or a thematically determined 'chain' of poems or table talk, would each time come full circle in the dining-room. Most probably, we should envision a symposiarch intervening at the outset of each 'round' to suggest or impose a subject to be talked or sung about, the rules of the competition about to unfold, as well as the manner of drinking the accompanying 'round' of wine. Under such circumstances, while drinking *epidexia*, no one can be omitted from the 'speeding' cup (or another object determining the order of performances), but at the same time no one can avoid participating in the current sympotic contest. The circulating hymns, songs, riddles, toasts, jokes, or jibes are apportioned to everyone equally and in a rigorously observed order. As a rule, then, this procedure not only imposes rigorous equality between the diners but also fundamentally regulates their competition. Symptomatically, as we have seen, by obliterating or 'reversing' this organizational principle, Greek writers play up hierarchy, or even tyranny, against equality, but also feature an atomized group of diners as set against a solidary community of fellows.

[140] See above, p. 86.

[141] Among the classical treatments of this fundamental issue, see esp. Burckhardt (1898–1902) (see also the excellent introduction to the English translation of Burckhardt's book: Murray (1998)). See also Adkins (1960) and Strasburger (1982).

One can say that the 'sweet compulsion of the speeding cups', as Bacchylides put it,[140] was a technical means of assuring the necessary balance between the group ideals and the individual ambitions of the diners, thus articulating the tension between the competitive spirit and the ideal of equality—a tension fundamental to Greek civilization, as Jacob Burckhardt taught us long ago.[141] The aforementioned 'dialectic' of tension between two arguably contradictory aspects of the symposion (nos. 5 and 6 of the definition proposed above) proves possible through the workings of the principle of the circulating cup.

I have already quoted the words of Luigi Enrico Rossi (Rossi 1983) who characterized the symposion as a 'spectacle for itself' (*spettacolo a se stesso*). Alluding to this dictum, Ezio Pellizer once said that 'the real spectacle which the *symposion* offers unto itself is . . . a disciplined display of individual and collective passions, in search of a norm to regulate the *epithymiai* and social tensions at the same time as it offers them an outlet' (Pellizer 1990, 183). The workings of the *epidexia* principle constitute the paramount elements in creating the technical framework for this 'spectacle'.

Combined with the non-hierarchical spatial organization of the banquet hall, the rule regulating the order of performances of individual diners emphasized the independence of the momentary sympotic hierarchies—stemming as they did from one's successes or failures in sympotic performances—from the hierarchies and stable values of the outside world. But a crucial point about this organizing rule of the symposion must be added. The *epidexia* procedure is by its nature repetitive. Another possibility awaits feasters with every new 'turn' of the circulating cup. Intervening victories and failures, if the latter do not utterly discredit individual diners, are important but fleeing and (to a certain extent) constantly changing, just as they should be jovially enjoyed and light-heartedly suffered. Not unlike the far from serious sympotic eroticism, this repetitiveness of the principle organizing sympotic entertainment creates an inconsequential atmosphere of joy, something, as we know, that Greek mythology and morality reserved for the Olympian gods alone.

II

The Symposion and History

3

The 'Cup of Nestor', the Near East, and the Early Archaic Symposion

3.1 THE 'CUP OF NESTOR' AND THE SYMPOSION

3.1.1 The First Convivial Poem of the Greeks

Nearly two decades ago, Oswyn Murray (Murray 1994) brilliantly interpreted the so-called 'Cup of Nestor' from the San Montano necropolis on the island of Pithekoussai as the earliest unambiguous testimony of the symposion (see Map 3.1).[1] The date for the deposition of this LG II cup (see Figure 3.1) is *c.*720–710 BC,[2] but the date of its fabrication may be *c.*735–720 BC or even slightly earlier.[3] This three-line retrograde inscription in the Chalcidian script reads as follows (*CEG* I, no. 454 = Meiggs–Lewis, no. 1 = *SEG* XIV, no. 604):

Νεστορος : ϵ[μι]: ευποτ[ον] ποτεριον
hος δ αν τοδε πιεσι : ποτερι[ο] : αυτικα κενον
hιμερος hαιρεσει : καλλιστε[φα]νο : Αφροδιτες

'I am Nestor's cup, good to drink from. | Whoever drinks from it, straightaway that man | will be seized by the desire belonging to fairly crowned Aphrodite.'

[1] Cf. already Buchner & Russo (1955) and a general discussion in C. F. Russo in *Pithekoussai I*, pp. 743–750 and Bartoněk and Buchner (1995) 146–154. See also interesting remarks by B. Powell (1991) 166–167.

[2] A radical revision of the date of the inscription in Carpenter (1963) to an earlier period was decisively discarded by Metzger (1965). For a recent reassessment of the complex chronology of the tomb of the 'Cup of Nestor', see Nizzo (2007) 33–36. But cf. Ridgway (2009) 445–446. For this grave in its local context, see below, Section 5.2.1.

[3] The provenance of the so-called *bird-kotylai*, to which this cup belongs, was traditionally traced back to Rhodes (Ialysos?), but recent analyses point rather to northern Ionia (Clazomenae?). See Coldstream (2008) [1968], 479.



Figure 3.1 Pithekoussai, LG II *kotyle*, the so-called 'Cup of Nestor' (*c.*725–710 BC); Lacco Ameno, Museo Civico Archeologico di Pithecusae in Villa Arbusto, inv. 166788. Courtesy of the Soprintendeza Speciale per i Beni Archeologici di Napoli e Pompei

Besides its problematic first line, the reconstruction of the text seems secure.[4] Its metrical interpretation is more controversial as far as the first line is concerned[5] but, whichever of the scholarly hypotheses we endorse, the point is that this line is different and consciously conceived to contrast with what follows.

[4] See e.g. Rüter and Matthiessen (1968); Dihle (1969); Marcovich (1969); West (1970); Watkins (1976); Risch (1987); cf. also Peters (1998). An alternative reading of the first line by Guarducci (1995) [1967], vol. I, pp. 226–227 (*m[e]n* or *m[en]* instead of *e[mi]* or *e[imi]* in lacuna) may at first look promising, but it would create an insurmountable logical problem. The cup of Nestor alluded to in the epigram would be contrasted with the Pithekoussan cup as 'good to drink from'. Meanwhile, for the author of our text, this *kotylē* was no doubt 'good to drink from' as well. Moreover, Guarducci's hypothetical opening formula is unparalleled in early Greek material as yet, whereas the traditional interpretation relies on well-attested early analogies, whose number is growing (see below). The same reservations apply to a recent reading of the first line by Wachter (2010) 252–254.

[5] The second and the third lines are good hexameters, but the first line is disputable. I for one would take it as prose.

This epigram is a precious testimony of early Greek literacy and early archaic literature, and it was unparalleled until a nearly contemporary and partly analogous potsherd inscription was found in Eretria in 1977.[6] If recent findings are any indicator—I am thinking of the so-called 'Hakesandros Cup' from Methone in Macedonia—more sympotic and (at least partly) poetic vase inscriptions are likely to be discovered in future.[7] The 'Cup of Nestor' inscription has famously been used to prove (or disprove) the late eighth century acquaintance with the present form of the *Iliad* and employed in debates surrounding the conceivable existence of lengthy epic poems in a written form in this period.[8] Although I personally think that there are good reasons to assume the inscriber's awareness of some epic poem featuring Nestor and the possibility of full-scale, written epic poems at this point, scholarly agreement on this issue unsurprisingly is lacking. This is especially true when all sides of such debates resort to arbitrary arguments and sweeping assertions. In my own discussion, the 'Cup of Nestor' will appear strictly in relation to a discussion concerning the origins of the symposion.

* * *

The *bird-kotylē* in question is a wine cup principally used for drinking. The epigram mentions the effects of wine alongside the pleasures of Aphrodite, and as we shall see in a moment, it does this in a particularly sophisticated poetic form. The convivial function of this poem is beyond doubt.

Any attempt to make a more precise use of this testimony would depend on our initial decision regarding Nestor, as mentioned at the outset of the epigram. Is he the Pylian epic hero? (And if so, the one we know from Homer?) Or was he just a flesh-and-blood Pithecussan resident? (And if so, was he perhaps the owner of the cup for whom the inscription was intended?) Divergent interpretations of the epigram as

[6] See now *LSAG*[2] pp. 416, 434, pl. 73,4 and Bartoněk and Buchner (1995) 190–192; cf. esp. Johnston and Andriomenou (1989) (*editio princeps* of this grafitto). The bearing of this object (a LG II *bird-kotylē* as well) and its inscription (a badly preserved three-line epigram) on the interpretation of the 'Cup of Nestor' has been variously assessed, depending on diverging readings of this fragmentary text (cf. e.g. S. West 1994, 11–12 and Pavese 1996, 13–14).

[7] See *Methone Pierias* I, no. 2 (Mθ 2248), p. 341 (a late eighth- or early seventh-century Euboean *skyphos*).

[8] See e.g. Heubeck (1979) 115 with n. 821 on p. 160; Powell (1991) *passim*, esp. 183–186; Cassio (1994); Latacz (1996) 54.

a sympotic poem are to some extent conditioned by their proponents' respective answers to these questions.[9] Forgoing any such commitment, I will instead begin by stating what may be said about this cup and its epigram without deciding on the identity of its 'Nestor'.

As P. A. Hansen and O. Murray observed, the epigram consists of a series of witty *concetti* perfectly suited to a symposion. In the first place, it plays with the ownership formula we find on a number of early Greek vessels.[10] It also hints at another early epigraphic formula, which would be appropriate to a vessel the owner wanted to keep in safe possession, namely a curse threatening the thief with diverse sanctions, such as was used for a certain Tataie from the neighbouring Kyme: 'whoever steals this cup will go blind'.[11] By contrast, the user of the 'Cup of Nestor' is paradoxically supposed to be seized by the pleasurable desire for love. Moreover, the first and the second lines, suggesting a curse formula about to unfold, would form a sophisticated joke based on generally observed rules of hospitality (note the amusingly misleading impression that the owner begrudges giving the cup to the implied addressee of the epigram).[12] From a formal point of view, what we would have here is a chain of witticisms *παρὰ προσδοκίαν* (or *ἐξ ἀπροσδοκήτου*) capturing their reader's attention by unexpected twists of thought or literary 'false leads'.[13]

O. Murray aptly called this short poem the first Greek *carmen convivale,* pointing out a number of sympotic poems of the archaic and classical period analogous in form and content to the 'Cup of Nestor': not only the favoured poetic themes of wine, love, and song,

[9] For Nestor as an epic hero, see e.g. Hansen (1976) and Murray (1994); cf. Jeffery (1984) 294 n. 378 and B. Powell (1989) esp. 340; cf. also Danek (1994/1995). For the opposite view, see in particular Pavese (1996); cf. already Havelock (1982) 194–195. Note that other interpretations of the 'Cup of Nestor' are not incompatible with its potentially 'sympotic' context (cf. e.g. Dihle 1969 and S. West 1994).

[10] See e.g. *LSAG*^{2} pp. 416, 434, pl. 73,4 (Eretria, end of the eighth century); *LSAG*^{2} pp. 347, 425, pl. 67,1 (Rhodes, end of the eighth century?); *LSAG*^{2} p. 401, pl. 1,4 (Athens, mid seventh century); *LSAG*^{2} p. 415, pl. 66,69 (Smyrna, end of the seventh century?); *LSAG*^{2} p. 419, pl. 77,8 (Selinous, *c.*600 BC). Cf. also the next note.

[11] *IG* XIV 865 = *LSAG*^{2} pp. 238, 240, pl. 47,3 (Kyme, *c.*675–650 BC?) = *SEG* XLVII, no. 1475 = *IGASMG III* 16). For a possible sympotic context of this inscription, see below, n. 16. For another elaborate sympotic variation on this motif, see now the aforementioned 'Cup of Hakesandros' (*Methone Pierias I*, no. 2 (Mθ 2248), p. 341).

[12] Thus Hansen (1976) 41. Contrast the straightforward message on a late-sixth-century *skyphos* from Gela (*LSAG*^{2} p. 411, pl. 53,50): 'I belong to Pantares and I am a common possession of the friends'. For this inscription, see below, p. 136.

[13] Thus Hansen (1976) 33 and *passim*.

but also 'the unexpected' (*aprosdokēton*) as a preferred figure of speech in a poetry that strives, 'in a spirit of light-hearted rivalry' (Murray 1994, 51), for antitheses, paradoxes, and riddles of different kinds. Murray likewise observed that the epigram is a prime, and chronologically antecedent, example of Greek 'meta-sympotic discourse', a reflection on the banquet set in a convivial environment. More specifically, the 'Cup of Nestor' bears witness to a full-fledged idea of *euphrosynē* or a self-conscious notion of sympotic pleasure. Moreover, the 'Cup of Nestor' is 'the earliest evidence for a distinctively sympotic life-style', a relaxed and luxurious environment, in which 'poetry is already at home in the drinking group, poetry, not performed by professionals as in Homer, but created by the members of the group' (Murray 1994, 51).[14]

As to the original context or use of the inscribed vessel, it is hardly conceivable that the cup and its epigram were intended for the individual in whose grave it was found. Since the boy was only ten or perhaps twelve to fourteen years old,[15] his 'grave goods relate to the lifestyle which he would have been expected to enjoy if he had reached maturity: they symbolize the expectations and grief of his parents in relation to their own social customs' (Murray 1994, 47). As such, the 'Cup of Nestor' would be symptomatic of the symbolic cultural self-identification of the previous generation, which should make us interpret this earliest testimony of the symposion as bearing evidence to its emergence no later than the mid eighth century BC.

Murray adds one point, which I find more disputable. 'When Nestor's cup characterizes the drinking party for the first time as the preserve of Aphrodite, this implies the arrival of the reclining couch and the presence of instruments adapted to desire, that is *hetairai* and slaves' (Murray 1994, 51).[16] I will try to verify Murray's contention later in this chapter, but let me observe, as a preliminary,

[14] For convivial poetic performances in Homer, see below, pp. 210–211.

[15] See below, p. 252.

[16] It is important to observe that homoerotic love may also be included within the realm of Aphrodite, as in Pindar, fr. 128 Maehler (cf. also Havelock 1982, 195, with n. 22 on p. 207). I would be tempted to interpret the inscription of Tataie, quoted above, from the nearby Kyme on the mainland (*LSAG*^{2} p. 238, 240, pl. 47,3; '*c.* 675–650 BC?') as maybe the earliest Greek testimony to the presence of courtesans in the sympotic context. The function of the vase (a Protocorinthian *aryballos*, called 'lekythos' by its owner) bearing a fairly aggressive inscription is not likely to be domestic and it might have been employed as a perfume container provided for a luxurious drinking party (for the sympotic use of perfumes, see above, p. 39 with n. 79). If so, the vessel might

that although the sympotic couch may obviously assume erotic undertones, there is nothing in the poem to suggest a necessary link between the gifts of Aphrodite and convivial *klinai* in the last quarter of the eighth century.

This is as far as one can go without determining the identity of the Nestor in the epigram. If, however, we agree on interpreting Nestor as the epic hero (but not necessarily Homeric), the epigram would assume a supplementary dimension. It would form a sophisticated 'intertextual' joke. First, the object itself is a subtle but rather simple piece of pottery. If alluding to the Nestor's heavy cup of solid gold we know from the *Iliad* (or conceivably, a particularly memorable and rich vessel associated with this hero in other epic traditions), the contrast could not be more pronounced.[17] Whence the paradoxical effect of the pot's initial claim to be the cup of Nestor, the epic hero. The paradox would press even further, because Homer stresses how difficult it would be for anyone else but its owner to lift this extremely heavy cup, whereas our vessel claims to be 'good to drink from' (*eupotos*).

Based on the assumption that the name refers to the epic Nestor, Murray adds two more controversial points. First, he detects in the epigram the amusing idea of a 'contrast between Nestorian and Aphrodisiac styles of drinking'. With this, we touch upon a historical explanation of the origins of the symposion, since this contrast 'is not merely literary' for Murray, but 'surely reflects a contemporary development in drinking customs' (Murray 1994, 51, cf. 48), i.e. the development of the contemporaneous and newly emergent symposion from earlier 'heroic feasts' we encounter in Homer. Secondly, since the burial that yielded the cup under scrutiny is sometimes interpreted as belonging to a member of a family of a mixed Phoenician-Greek culture (if not origin),[18] 'it is always possible that it was on Pithecusae rather than in the east that the Greeks first came into contact with and adopted the distinctive customs of the symposion' (Murray 1994, 54, cf. 48).

Setting these ideas temporarily aside, if we do not accept the identification of Nestor as the epic hero, a partly different picture

have belonged to a *hetaira*. But cf. a late-eighth- or early-seventh-century *oinochoë* from Pithekoussai belonging to a woman, too (Bartoněk and Buchner 1995, no. 20: *Αμες ειμι*).

[17] See *Il.* XI 632–637. Another 'cup of Nestor' was hypothetically identified in *Cypria* fr. 15 Davies (= 17 Bernabé; *ap.* Athen. II 35 c); cf. Hansen (1976) 41–43 and S. West (1994) esp. 14–15 (with n. 25).

[18] More on this problem below, Section 3.2.1.

emerges regarding the sympotic interpretation of this epigram. If the personal name of the owner of the cup were actually 'Nestor',[19] we lose much of the sophistication attributed to this poem. In particular, we are deprived of its witty contrast between the monumental epic vessel and our LG II *bird-kotylē*, let alone that between 'heroic' and the 'modern' life-styles and their respective banquets. Along these lines, C. O. Pavese suggests a more literal interpretation of the epigram in sympotic terms. He interprets the inscribed pot as a so-called 'loving cup' (*φιλοτήσιος* [or *φιλοτησία*] [*sc. κύλιξ*]), most probably involving an amusing toast of flirtation between two potential homosexual partners during a symposion.[20] In search of a link between the cup and the burial from which it originates, but without seriously committing himself to this reasoning, Pavese puts forward the following hypothesis. If the 'Nestor' of the epigram was the deceased adolescent, he might have been a real-life *eromenos* envisioned in this poem or a would-be *erastēs* and symposiast who died too young to enjoy his ideal life-style. However, if 'Nestor' were the adult owner of the cup who ritually destroyed it in grief on the pyre, he might have been the father or lover of the buried boy.

* * *

For my present purposes, let me briefly reassess the outcome of earlier sympotic readings of the 'Cup of Nestor'.

First and foremost, the epigram seems univocally to attest to the existence of a luxurious wine party in which wine drinking and eroticism were closely associated. Secondly, a favourite pastime of the diners must have been short poetic performances by the participants of the banquet.[21] In particular, such witty exchanges were competitive in character, since the very essence of this epigram lay

[19] See esp. Dihle (1969) 259 (cf. Hansen 1976, 33–35) and Pavese (1996). Names of epic characters appear rarely in our pre-Hellenistic material, mostly in the circles aspiring to some link with the heroic world. Meanwhile, the earliest 'human' Nestor I am aware of is known as late as the fifth century BC from Athens (*LGPN* II, *s.v.*: a *patronimikon* on a potsherd used in the Athenian ostracism).

[20] Pavese (1996) 17–19; cf. ibid. p. 14. Recently see also Catoni (2010) 172–174; cf. ibid., pp. 180–183. Cf. already Havelock (1982) 195 (with an imaginative 'reconstruction' of a hypothetical verbal exchange involved). For the sympotic 'loving cup' or 'cup of friendship', see above, p. 50 with n. 113. For other interpretations of the 'Cup of Nestor' as alluding to the techniques of erotic magic, see S. West (1994) and esp. Faraone (1996).

[21] This of course does not exclude professional performers being present at their banquets, but non-professional poetic activity was already prized there.

in a series of paradoxical ideas uttered in order to surprise and gain the upper hand over one's fellow-banqueters. To put it in more general terms, in the second half of the eighth century BC, the élite banquet was already about excelling and competing in cultural performances. What we are presented with is a culture-oriented drinking-party, involving the participants' active deployment of their 'cultural capital'. Finally and most importantly, the very act of ritually destroying this symbolically laden vessel on the pyre of a prematurely deceased élite member, combined with other meaningfully convivial elements of the equipment of this burial, leaves us in no doubt that ceremonial and culture-oriented wine drinking was a crucial element of the self-identification for the Pithekoussan élite of the time.

3.1.2 The 'Cup of Nestor', the *Epidexia* Rule, and Élite Banqueting at Pithekoussai

It may be worthwhile to try and visualize the intended manner in which the epigram of the 'Cup of Nestor' might have worked at a symposion. P. A. Hansen briefly observed that its 'reader ... can only be imagined as a guest in the owner's house' (Hansen 1976, 41). I think we should be more specific and suggest that all the potential guests of banquets attended by the owner could be viewed as the addressees of this epigram. L. H. Jeffery and B. Powell argued we should recognize 'the verse-capping symposiastic *skolion*' (thus Powell 1989, 340) of the poem.[22] What they meant was a 'recording' of a series of consecutive poetic utterances by two or three diners responding to one another. I find the idea of such an epigraphic 'recording' of bits of a real symposion implausible, but both scholars are right in pointing out the interactive character of the poetic situation involved. Meanwhile, I would take the three lines not as documenting a bygone poetic exchange, but as a sophisticated and conventional scenario that belongs to the future.

Now, whether we ascribe the text of the epigram to one, two, or three 'poetic personae', the essence of this utterance is literary surprise with resultant intellectual pleasure for its reader or readers. In this way, the 'Cup of Nestor' joins the category of Greek 'speaking vases' that address their users during a banquet, most often with a

[22] Cf. Powell (1991) 166–167. See already Jeffery (1984) 294, no. 378. Recently, cf. Malkin (1998) 157. The hypothesis I advance here is presented in more detail in my forthcoming paper, Wecowski (forthcoming *b*).

brief salutation, which easily becomes a rudimentary convivial toast ('cheers and drink up!') or a kind of self-advertisement ('I am a beautiful cup').[23] Later inscriptions of this type have a stereotyped character, but may have added to sympotic entertainments, as in the case of a peculiar 'mirror game' on an Oltos-cup (*c.*520 BC) featuring a courtesan who passes a cup to another courtesan with a simple toast: 'you too, drink up!' (Figure. 2.1).[24] During a symposion, the cup itself may have been passed around with similar (or exactly the same) words, so we may envisage a feaster reading such an inscription aloud when passing the cup to his (or her) neighbour.

But we may go even further than that in our interpretation of this class of objects. There is a non-negligible share of ownership formulas among archaic Greek vase-inscriptions, including the earliest ones. Such inscriptions are sometimes first-person utterances of the type: 'I am the cup that belongs to X'. As far as we can judge, these are not dedicatory inscriptions and a common domestic context for such texts is hardly conceivable. Given that a majority of such early vases are sympotic vessels, I think we should a priori postulate a sympotic use for their inscriptions as well. Moreover, it is important to note that such pots are in principle simple drinking cups of little economic value; more conspicuous and more expensive vases (such as *kraters*) do not carry inscriptions of this kind in early archaic times, whereas pouring vases (such as *oinochoai*) bear them only exceptionally.[25]

I would argue that asserting the ownership of one's cup during a symposion was crucial since cups were supposed to circulate, according to the *epidexia* principle, amongst the diners. Bringing your favourite vessel to a banquet could easily result in losing it, taken by someone else—on purpose or accidentally. Unsurprisingly, theft-preventing formulas could accompany the ownership inscriptions under scrutiny or appear without them in a sympotic context

[23] In general, cf. Lissarrague (1987) 60–65, with n. 39 on p. 146.

[24] More on this vase, above, p. 86 n. 6.

[25] See provisionally, based on the catalogue compiled by Bartoněk and Buchner (1995): drinking cups, poetic inscriptions (no. 1 [the 'Cup of Nestor'] and B1 [from Eretria]; add now *Methone Pierias I*, no. 2 [the cup of Hakesandros]); drinking cups, ownership inscriptions consisting of a name in genitive with a verb (6, 7, 8, 13, 14, B4 [from Eretria]; add *Methone Pierias I*, nos. 1, 3, 7, as well as Kenzelmann Pfyffer, Theurillat, and Verdan 2005, no. 1); drinking cups, name without a verb (9, 10, 11, 12, 15, 16, 17, B2 and B3 [both from Eretria], B20 [from Al Mina]); *oinochoai* (nos. 20, 21?); *aryballoi* (22, C1 [from Kyme, the vessel of Tataie, poetic inscription]); *amphorae* (nos. 23, 24; add now *Methone Pierias I*, no. 4).

(see above). A late archaic *skyphos* from Gela (*LSAG*^{2} 411, pl. 53,50 = *IGASMG* I^2 10 = *SEG* XVI 556; *SEG* LIV 882 [2]) says: 'I belong to Pantares and I am a common property of the friends' (*Παντάρεός εἰμι | καὶ τῶν φίλων ροινά εἰμι*). This last example is a deliberately paradoxical use of the ownership formula in a sympotic context, transferring the 'proprietary rights' to the cup—seriously or jokingly—to all the *philoi* present at a symposion (or rather at their regularly held symposia).[26]

At this point, I believe that we may assume that both playful formal 'models' used in the epigram of the 'Cup of Nestor' were intended to produce a series of literary 'surprises'—the ownership formula and the anti-theft curse—strongly linking this text to its natural, i.e. sympotic, context. But there is much more. All these formulas and their paradoxical uses, such as the aforementioned Pantares' inscription, gain their full force when read aloud, precisely while being passed around from one diner to another. At times, the desired effect may be rather vulgar, as on a *skyphos* from Olbia (*IGDOP* 31 = *SEG* XLI 662; beginning of the fifth century BC), where an obscene sexual exhortation is completed by the name on the opposite side of the vessel, and is therefore intended to be read separately by the next diner in a row (who wanted to have sexual intercourse, let him pay ten arrows [i.e. Olbian coins—M.W.] and have it with . . . Hephaistodoros).[27] A *graffito* from Herbessos (Montagna di Marzo) near Gela in Sicily (*IGASMG* II^2 120 = *IGDS* 167 = *SEG* XXXV 1009; *SEG* XXXVIII 948; early fifth century) predicts a similar fate for the diner who is currently reading the inscription (and the perpetrator will be the inscriber of the text himself).[28] In this case, when read aloud by an unprepared feaster, the concluding phrase will produce a mockingly surprising effect intended by the writer (who most probably was also the owner of this vessel). In a way, such inscriptions become a peculiar form of the *skōmma*, sympotic banter,[29] since we may expect that their insults to be targeted at one of the members of the sympotic group to which the originator of the inscription belonged. It is important to bear in mind that in all the aforementioned cases the

[26] An obscene variation on this theme is provided by a graffito from Sicily mentioned below (*IGASMG* II^2 120: *τοῦτον τὸν σρύφον Πόρρος ἀποδίδōτι ἐς τὸν θίασον τῶν π*[. . .]*ν* (?) . . .).

[27] [Side A:] *ὅς ἐθέλει βενῆν . . . πυγιζέτω* [Side B:] *Ἡφαιστόδωρον*.

[28] . . . *ho δὲ γράπσας τὸν ἀννέμο<ν>τα πυγίξει*.

[29] On which see above, pp. 50–51.

literary 'surprise' will only be possible when the vase circulates 'to the right' in the dining-room.

The provocative, but by no means coarse, epigram of the 'Cup of Nestor' was no different. We do not need to distribute its consecutive and paradoxical 'turns' among two or three 'poetic personae'. The desired effect will be produced by reading its consecutive lines aloud, whether by several diners or just one—surprised by the series of sophisticated *concetti* put forward by the owner of the vase.

* * *

If we agree to envision the workings of the 'Cup of Nestor' in this way, namely to link the intended literary effect of its epigram with the principle of cup circulation, we may draw two more general conclusions. First, as I have already observed in the previous chapter, the rule of *epidexia* was only possible when all diners were considered essentially equal, which therefore suggest the existence of the egalitarian banquet in LG Pithekoussai. After all, the amusing and surprising turns of thought in the epigram unambiguously suggest the relaxed and light-hearted atmosphere of a venue in which everyone can be challenged to an amusing verbal exchange by anyone else present. Secondly, the subtle convivial use of the poem inscribed on the cup and circulating among diners is indicative of the character of at least a part of the Pithekoussan élites. The complex literary joke would have been useless without the assumption that all of those present at the symposia, or at least the majority, were not only literate but also able to appreciate short literary forms in writing.

Actually, we are not doomed to speculation regarding the level of alphabetization amongst the Pithekoussan élites. Although it may sound strange at so early a date, there is a good reason to believe this level must have been fairly high. A fragment of an LG *krater*, painted in the manner of the Cesnola Painter[30] and most probably produced on the island, was found in the industrial area of Mazzola on the slopes of the hill of Mezzavia, under the foundations of the so-called Structure II.[31] This piece of pottery bears a *dipinto* which is

[30] On the Cesnola Painter, see esp. Coldstream (1971) and (2003) 192, and in particular Coldstream (1994). Cf. Kourou (1998). See also below, pp. 278–280 with Figure 5.6.

[31] See Buchner (1970/1971) esp. 64–67. Cf. also Ridgway (1992) 96 with fig. 26 (below). Cf. *LSAG*^{2} Suppl. p. 453 ('The Euboic Colonies, Italy', no. Ia), as well as Cordano (1984) 281, 289 (no. 1 in the Catalogue) with fig. 1 on p. 303. Most recently,

the earliest Greek signature of a potter (or perhaps of a painter): '. . . inos made me' (. . .]ινος μ' ἐποίεσε[.). There can be no doubt, I suppose, that this inscription, painted before the vase was fired, was intended for prospective customers of the workshop, including the local 'convivial élite'. To put it very cautiously, then, at least two Pithekoussans of the LG period, the inscriber (or owner?) of the 'Cup of Nestor' and the painter (or potter?) of the Mazzola *krater*, perceived a part of the local élite as an essentially literate group in possession of literary culture.[32]

3.1.3 The 'Cup of Nestor' and the Late Geometric Symposion

If we were to apply the list of essential characteristics of the symposion compiled in the previous chapter based on later literary sources, the first thing to emphasize would be the particular focus of the Pithekoussan epigram on wine consumption. It is impossible to say whether this points to the separation between drinking and eating on LG Pithekoussai (1 on my list), but this seems likely. The same may be said about the practice of night-time banqueting (2).[33] Meanwhile, there can be no doubt as to the importance of eroticism in the convivial discourse (3) and the aggressive and provocative nature of the latter (4). On a more general level, we certainly face an atmosphere infused with the spirit of rivalry (5) during an essentially egalitarian occasion (6).

All this is sufficient cause to say that in the second half of the eighth century BC the fundamental characteristics of the symposion we know from later sources—namely, a culture-oriented, competitive, and egalitarian male drinking party—were already present. This being the case, we should postulate a rather long historical development behind this full-fledged and sophisticated form of élite banquet.

see Wachter (2001) 151 (EUC 1, with full bibliography). The *krater* is dated to the 'late eighth century' by Cordano, '*c.*730–720 BC' (G. Buchner *per litteras*, quoted by R. Wachter), and to '*c.*700–675 BC' by A. Johnston (in *LSAG*^{2} Suppl.). For the symposia properly speaking as conceivably organized in Structure I (Structure II was built on its remnants), see below, p. 176. It should be added that the *krater* most probably originally belonged to Structure I, perhaps destroyed in an earthquake.

[32] For the full catalogue of the Pithakoussan inscriptions known thus far, 45 in total, see Bartoněk and Buchner (1995).

[33] On possible evidence for nocturnal banqueting as early as in the eighth century (and surely in Homer), see below, pp. 180 and 215–216.

Therefore, I cannot agree with Murray that some formal peculiarities of the epigram's metrics, as well as the contrast between the 'Nestorian' and the 'Aphrodisiac' style of feasting, as allegedly present in the epigram, point to a recent development of the symposion from some earlier 'heroic banquet' due to a decisive impulse from the Near East. Later in this chapter, I will try to verify Murray's hypothesis from various standpoints. One important element of this task must be a critical reassessment in dating the spread of the custom of reclining while feasting in the Greek milieus, as suggested by the broad historical context of the Pithekoussan 'Cup of Nestor'. For one thing, there is nothing to suggest the adoption of this habit in our epigram.

3.2 SYMPOSION AND THE NEAR EAST

3.2.1 Pithekoussan Banquets between East and West

Before I proceed, it is essential to mention a scholarly hypothesis that is sometimes used to substantiate the idea of the Levantine origins of the symposion. I am thinking here of David Ridgway's suggestion to ascribe the complex of burials, to which the tomb of the 'Cup of Nestor' belongs, to a family with oriental roots.[34] Accordingly, Ridgway tried to dissociate the cup from this (hypothetical) environment (Ridgway 1992, 116), but other scholars, including Oswyn Murray, used his hypothesis to suggest that the symposion might have been born on Pithekoussai, where the Greeks might have come into contact with, and perhaps adopted, specific Oriental convivial customs.[35]

Although the 'Pithekoussan connection' for the origins of the Greek symposion may look quite promising, given the well-attested presence of a Phoenician or Aramaic population on the island, I think that scholars have recently gone too far in stressing the allegedly multicultural character of the Pithekoussan settlement.[36] In particular, the idea

[34] Ridgway (1992) 115–116; cf. already Ridgway (1979) 78–80.

[35] Thus e.g. Murray (1994) 54.

[36] In general, see Ridgway (1992) 111–118 (with the bibliography on p. 153); cf. Ridgway (1979); Docter and Niemeyer (1994) esp. 110–113, and Boardman (1999). Cf. briefly Boffa (1998) esp. 156–160. In a wider context, see also Boardman (1999) 39–50 and Aubet (1993) 314–316 (with bibliography on p. 344). For the Aramaic inscriptions in the eighth-century Pithekoussai, see already Buchner (1978) with Garbini (1978). For a refreshingly sober reassessment of the 'apparent multi-culturalism' of Pithekoussai, see recently Lane Fox (2010) esp. 143–147.



Map 3.1 The Greek world and the Mediterranean

of a 'cultural transfer' resulting in the development of the symposion seems very unlikely.[37] As I mentioned before, the formal and intellectual sophistication of the epigram from the 'Cup of Nestor' bespeaks a rather long historical process behind the custom that produced this poem, a process reaching back to long before the foundation of this settlement and the multicultural contacts therein.[38] But more importantly, it is self-evident that the subtle Greek epigram unambiguously shows that being a full member of the culture-oriented convivial élite on Pithekoussai necessitated rather solid Greek 'cultural capital'. On a more radical interpretation of the 'Cup of Nestor', this background would include some familiarity with the Greek epics of the Trojan circle. At the very least, the evidence of the 'Cup of Nestor' is that the necessary cultural competence to join in the sympotic entertainment included the competence to appreciate, and most probably perform, short convivial utterances conceived according to the formal rules of Greek poetry. Capable of accomplishing this, 'Pithekoussans—of Carthaginian, Corinthian, Euboean, Iberian, mainland Italian, N[orth] Syrian, Phoenician, and perhaps Sardinian descent' (for this is how D. Ridgway has recently characterized the 'ethnic' composition of the Pithekoussan settlement: Ridgway 2009, 444) would be so deeply rooted in Greek culture that speculations about a Phoenician or more generally Oriental influence on the nascent symposion—interpreted in its local context based on the testimony of the 'Cup of Nestor'—appear superfluous.

3.2.2 Symposion and the Iconography of the Levantine Feast[39]

The discussion revolving around the problem of the Oriental origins of the symposion is often set off by a passage from the Book of Amos, a prophetic book of the Hebrew Bible (Amos 6:1–7):[40]

[37] Ridgway (1992) 115–116, suggested a reasonable alternative that this complex of burials belonged to 'exceptionally well-to-do Euboeans'. Cf. D'Agostino (1999) esp. 60–61, interpreting non-Greek continental pottery found in these graves alongside items of Oriental provenance.

[38] A similar argument was rightly put forward long ago by Alan Johnston regarding the idea of the adoption of the Phoenician script by the Greeks on Pithekoussai (Johnston 1983, 68).

[39] Sections 3.2.2–3.3.2 were translated from Polish by Dorota Dzierzbicka. All the Biblical quotations in this chapter follow the New Revised Standard Version.

[40] A good introduction to the Book of Amos is offered by Blenkinsopp (1997) 90–106 (with an extensive bibliography ibid., pp. 90–91). For a detailed discussion of

> Alas for those who are at ease in Zion, and for those who feel secure on Mount Samaria, the notables of the first of the nations, to whom the house of Israel resorts! [2] ... [3] O you that put far away the evil day, and bring near a reign of violence? [4] Alas for those who lie on beds of ivory, and lounge on their couches, and eat lambs from the flock, and calves from the stall; [5] who sing idle songs to the sound of the harp, and like David improvise on instruments of music; [6] who drink wine from bowls, and anoint themselves with the finest oils, but are not grieved over the ruin of Joseph! [7] Therefore they shall now be the first to go into exile, and the revelry of the loungers (*marzēaḥ*) shall pass away.

Let us momentarily set aside the consequences of the fact that the Samarian élites castigated by the prophet feast in a reclining position. I would first like to focus on other specific parallels between the feast of the Israelites recalled by Amos and the symposion. Even at first glance, the similarity is striking: feasting in a reclining position; musical and vocal performances by banqueters anointed with perfumes; and, importantly, a focus on (extensive) wine consumption. The Book of Amos most probably came into being in the mid eighth century BC.[41] Therefore, we have at our disposal a source that is more or less contemporary with the testimony of the 'Cup of Nestor' and that points to the existence of a Levantine banquet very similar to the one attested in the Greek settlement in the Gulf of Naples.

There are two ways of approaching the problem of possible connections between these two types of banquets. On one hand, we can trace the iconography of the Middle-Eastern banquet and the diffusion of its elements throughout the Greek world. On the other hand, we can attempt a systematic approach and compare the two types of feasts using the available literary sources that refer to them. It should be stressed that these two directions of research are difficult to reconcile. In the study of iconography, we will be dealing with testimonies

this passage see McLaughlin (2001), 80–109 (esp. ibid., p. 81–83, for a brief comment on the textual problems; on pp. 87–89 this author refutes the arguments of scholars who attempt to consider verse 7, which includes the word *marzēaḥ*, a later addition). See also Zevit (2001) 576–577.

[41] In any case, the 'reality' to which this text refers disappeared in 722 BC, with the Assyrian conquest of Samaria. On the complex history of the redaction of this book, see Blenkinsopp (1997) 99–100. Given the uncertain historical references in the same text, the scholar finally concedes that the prophet was active (for a relatively short time) in the North around the mid eighth century. McLaughlin (2001) 108–109, dates the cited passage to *c.*760 BC.

from a rather consistent historical period,[42] but from a vast geographical area. They will be connected by the assumption of their common origin in the Phoenician cultural circle or inspirations drawn from the Syro-Palestinian region. In turn, when investigating the literary sources, we will scrutinize them for the presence of the term *marzēaḥ*, which will compel us to include texts written over several millennia throughout the Middle East and even the whole Mediterranean.

These two research paths, though extensively explored by scholars over the past few decades, are therefore not entirely reliable in terms of method. It is also hardly surprising that each of these paths yields different results concerning the assessment of similarities between the symposion and the Oriental banquet, which in itself should induce great caution in drawing general historical conclusions in this matter. The two paths meet, so to say, in the passage from the Book of Amos, which on the one hand contains elements of convivial practice corresponding to iconographic motifs in Levantine art (feasting in a reclining position, the accompaniment of music, and lavish surroundings) and, on the other hand, provides the term by which Amos designates a drinking party of this sort: *marzēaḥ*.

* * *

In a recent article, Hartmut Matthäus presented the concept of the Eastern origin of the symposion on the basis of iconography in what seems to be the most systematic manner.[43] Following Murray's identification of the habit of reclining while banqueting as the most important distinctive trait of the symposion, his starting point was the observation that in the Middle East the custom of feasting in a reclining position was not very common.

The oldest attestations of this tradition are found in Phoenician art. A silver Phoenician bowl from Cyprus carries a representation of an open air banquet to the accompaniment of music, attended by several reclining figures.[44] Matthäus points to a structural difference between the iconography of the 'Phoenician *Klinen-symposion*' and the Greek symposion. The Phoenician find clearly shows a hierarchy among the

[42] I tread carefully because, as we shall see, a considerable part of the finds of vital importance for this research is very difficult to date.

[43] Matthäus (1999/2000) (a summary of his reasoning in Matthäus 1999). Cf. also generally Matthäus (1993). Cf. also Fehr (1971) 7–25, as well as Dentzer (1982) 51–58 and 71–76. Recently, cf. Catoni (2010) 66–70.

[44] Nowadays in the Cesnola Collection, Metropolitan Museum, New York, inv. 74.51.4555 (Cy 13 Markoe). Cf. Markoe (1985) 181–182.

diners. Only one figure (the ruler?) reclines on a sofa with tall legs, while the others rest on mattresses laid on the ground.[45] Stylistic parallels to other Phoenician objects, and imitations of their motifs in Italy, lead Matthäus to date this artefact to the second or even the first half of the eighth century BC.[46] Even more meaningful, according to Matthäus, is the testimony of a North Syrian silver bowl found on Cyprus, which was made no later than the turn of the eighth and seventh centuries, and shows a (royal?) couple feasting in reclining position.[47] An inscription carved in characters of the Cypriot syllabary addresses the male figure as 'king' and the inscription next to the female figure likely reads 'Ruler of Cyprus' (syllabic counterpart of the word *Kypromedousa*).[48] In addition, a bronze Phoenician bowl from Cypriot Salamis, perhaps dating from the sixth century BC, shows an Egyptian-style male figure (a ruler?) surrounded by musicians and servants and resting on an exquisite sofa bed next to a woman, who is seated with a baby in her lap. Among other things, the bowl has erotic scenes featuring symposiasts lying on obviously less ostentatious couches.[49]

In the Middle East, the motif of a reclining banquet may have expressed the ideology of regal power through other media besides Levantine metal bowls. The most famous artefact is the relief of Ashurbanipal from the palace at Nineveh, which shows the king feasting on a richly decorated couch in the company of the queen, who is seated on an ornate throne (see Figure 3.2). The ruler's gaze falls on a severed head, suspended nearby, belonging to an Elamite king defeated around the mid seventh century BC.[50] To this testimony,

[45] Matthäus (1999/2000) 48.

[46] However, it is noteworthy that Dentzer (1982) 72 dates this object to as late as the first half of the sixth century BC.

[47] Metropolitan Museum in New York (Cesnola Collection), inv. 74.51.4557 (Cy 6 Markoe). Cf. Markoe (1985) 175–176. According to Dentzer (1982) 72 and Fehr (1971) 19, this bowl is no earlier than the first half of the sixth century BC.

[48] In this situation, the identification of this scene by Matthäus (1999/2000) 49, as a court scene refers to its original meaning in the Syrian context. The concept of the king feasting with a goddess indicates that the Cypriot Greeks connected this image with some local myth and/or ritual.

[49] London, British Museum, inv. 1982/5–19/1 (Cy 5 Markoe). Cf. Markoe (1985) 174–175. The gender of the reclining figures cannot be determined beyond doubt.

[50] See generally Fehr (1971) 7–18; Dentzer (1982) 51–52, 58–60, and 62–63; Barnett (1985); Reade (1995) 49–54. See, however, a radically different new reading of this scene in a paper by Schmidt-Colinet (1997). More on Assyrian couches and beds: Curtis (1996) 175–176. It needs to be pointed out that the royal custom of dining in a reclining position was a novelty in Assyria in this period. Earlier royal

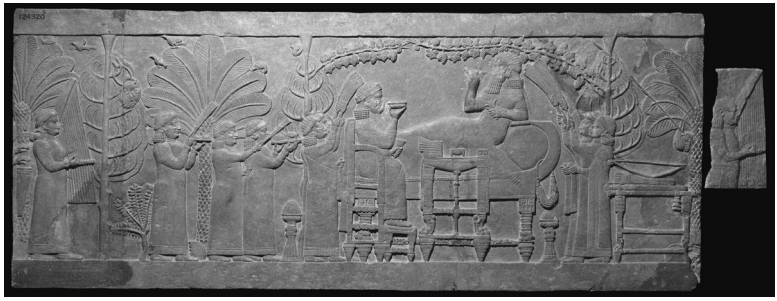


Figure 3.2 The 'Garden Party' relief from the North Palace of Ashurbanipal in Nineveh (*c.*645 BC; 58.42 cm × 139.7 cm); London, British Museum, inv. ME 124921. Image © The Trustees of the British Museum

one can add a hieroglyphic Luvian inscription from Kululu-Kaletepe (south-eastern Anatolia), in which Prince Panunis says about himself that he died in his own bed, eating and drinking, and the appropriate hieroglyph represents a couch that is very similar to the one on which Ashurbanipal was resting.[51]

All of these artefacts either originated in the Phoenician cultural circle or must have come into being under its influence (Cyprus, neo-Hittite North Syria, Assyria) and allegedly indicate that the custom of dining in a reclining position was known in this region already in the early eighth century BC. Matthäus then tries to uncover the link between this Middle Eastern custom and the Greek symposion. And it is on precisely this point that I do not find his efforts convincing.

Matthäus found two preserved fragments that contain representations of a couch (most likely for dining) in material from the Idaean Cave on Crete: an uncatalogued fragment of a bronze votive shield from the Museum in Iraklion, and two fragments of a miniature votive shield of bronze.[52] Both of these finds are very difficult to date, but Matthäus maintains that the series of shields with which we can connect our fragments may have come into being as early as the first half of the eighth century BC.

iconography shows rulers dining on thrones, and the widely discussed scenes from military campaigns, showing beds in officers' tents, appear alongside images of dining in a seated position (cf. Reade 1995, 41–49).

[51] See Hawkins (1980) 220–223.

[52] Athens, National Museum, inv. X 11764, 1a (Cr 8 Markoe) and 1b (previously uncatalogued fragment). Cf. Markoe (1985) 166.

The Idaean Sanctuary of Zeus is renowned for its long tradition of imitating various Oriental iconographic motifs.[53] However, Matthäus rightly stresses that, in this case, we are dealing with votive shields not used in any other context, so we can *a priori* expect a close connection between their iconography and the myth and ritual of this sanctuary (Matthäus 1999/2000, 53). At this point, we must remain very cautious, as both finds are preserved so poorly that not much besides the couches can be identified on them. The shield from the National Museum in Athens likely carried a representation of a dancing circle or ritual procession of women, and we might also expect the presence of musicians. However, more extensive speculation as to the original representations on both Idaean shields would, in my opinion, be unadvisable.[54] We therefore have no basis on which to conclude that they bore any other significant elements of Phoenician sympotic imagery with parallels to the Greek symposion. The more we emphasize the connection between these representations and the cult or myth of the Idaion of Zeus (and this is necessary in order to consider them representations of a Greek practice, not simply mechanical copies of Phoenician imagery), the smaller the likelihood of identifying them as the 'missing link' between the Greek aristocratic banquet and Levantine dining customs. It may simply be that the connection of the (hypothetical) scene, a reclining feast with a dancing procession of women, is to an unknown Idaean ritual, not an aristocratic banquet that we would be justified in calling a symposion.

However, Matthäus speculates that considering the very early and considerably thorough 'Orientalization' of the material culture of Crete, we can assume an equally deep 'Orientalization' of Cretan aristocratic customs, including the adoption of the 'couch-symposion' (*Klinen-symposion*) from the Phoenicians during and perhaps closer to the beginning of the eighth century BC. He even points to a location

[53] Cf. e.g. Coldstream (2003) 287–288. Much depends on the decision whether we consider the votive objects produced there as the work of local craftsmen or immigrant specialists (esp. North-Syrian). Cf. recently, the well-balanced assessment of the situation in the eighth and seventh centuries in the book by Hoffman (1997) 160–165 (against Kunze 1931, who strongly emphasized the importance of local production; Matthäus (1999/2000, n. 96 on p. 63 considered Hoffman's interpretation 'undeservedly skeptical'). Generally cf. also Matthäus (1998) esp. 135–138.

[54] Perhaps we are justified in assuming that they originally showed ritual drinking in a reclining position. But did they include, e.g., erotic motifs similar to the ones visible on the Cypriot bowl Cy 5 Markoe? This seems very doubtful.

in which the inter-cultural contacts may have been frequent, intensive and close enough for the 'absorption' of the symposion by Cretan élites, who were presumably fascinated by the lavish achievements of the 'higher' Levantine culture: the sanctuary at Kommos, where Phoenicians had been present since the ninth century BC.[55]

The drawback of Matthäus's hypothesis is primarily chronology. Even assuming an early dating for all the discussed artefacts, as he has done, thereby making it possible that the symposion was adopted at the beginning of the eighth century, it remains a fact that the only thing shared by the symposion and Levantine banquets, reflected in the shields from Crete, is the custom of reclining. As we shall see in subsequent sections, the earliest iconographic attestations of a reclining feast in Greece (and images from Italy created under Greek influence), date to no earlier than the end of the seventh century. What is more, the earliest Greek literary testimonies of this custom can hardly be dated to before the mid seventh century. Given the almost two-hundred-year gap between the moment of the supposed adoption of the Levantine 'reclining symposion' on Crete and the well-attested appearance of this motif in an unequivocally Greek environment, there is a greater chance that the couches seen on the Idaean material—if they were not a mechanical copy of Near-Eastern imagery—had strictly local and purely ritual significance.[56]

Beyond problems of chronology, the most important shortfall in Matthäus's position is the absence of a sufficiently specific definition of the symposion, and the partly connected, vague concept of the Greek banquet as a borrowing from the Levant. It bears repeating that in order to speak of an 'intercultural transfer', we must be dealing with deep relations and borrowings constitutive of the essence of the given phenomenon.[57] Since the Greek and Phoenician élites in the

[55] Cf. Shaw (1989). On Phoenician influences on Crete see recently Stampolidis & Kotsonas (2006). On the Phoenician presence in the Aegean and on Greek–Phoenician contacts, cf. generally Muhly (1970) (cf. recently Winter 1995); Coldstream (1982); Niemeyer (1984); Morris (1992) esp. 124–149; Matthäus (1998); Markoe (1998) and (2000) esp. 170–179. Cf. also Coldstream (1998*a*).

[56] Although this argument does not have decisive significance, it is noteworthy that, in later Antiquity, Crete was the area of the Greek world in which, as far as we know, banquets were not enjoyed in a reclining position (cf. above, 2.2.3).

[57] A thorough re-evaluation of the meaning of intercultural contacts in the ancient world was recently offered by Ulf (2009). Cf. generally the sober comments of Raaflaub (2004) on the hypothesis of a Phoenician impact on the formation of the Greek *polis*.

ninth and especially eighth century BC participated in diverse Mediterranean networks, there must have been situations when Greeks and Phoenicians dined together, learning about each other's convivial habits—in Kommos, Pithekoussai, Al Mina on the Syrian coast, in Phoenicia itself, and elsewhere. That having been said, the question remains as to whether such contacts had a decisive influence on the rise of the symposion, especially given that Matthäus himself stresses the notable differences between the Phoenician 'reclining feast' motif and the reclining symposion of the Greeks. Above all, there is a clear contrast between the Levantine hierarchic banquet and the egalitarian imagery of the symposion. Instead of focusing on the specific traits of the two phenomena, the scholars seem to be focused on proving the possibility of 'inter-cultural transfer' and on secondary similarities and comparisons to be made between the two forms of banqueting.

The same remarks could be applied to another hypothesis based on the iconography of a Levantine object—this one found even farther West. Oswyn Murray has recently pointed to a very interesting seal discovered in an archaic stratum of still-unpublished excavations at Monte Vetrano near Salerno (perhaps in the third quarter of the eighth century: the object was found 'out of context').[58] The seal bears a representation of a group of banqueters accompanied by a lyre player, a flute player, and a group of dancers. All of these figures are grouped around a stand supporting an amphora, from which some of the banqueters drink using long tubes. The group includes a woman and one obscure figure, interpreted as a reclining banqueter.

This find belongs to a class of seals of the 'Lyre-player group', produced in *c.*740–720 BC in Northern Syria and Cilicia. Many such seals are found in Syria, Cyprus, the Aegean islands, Central Greece and on the Tyrrhenian coast of central Italy. They were also found in large numbers at Pithekoussai.[59] The seal from Monte Vetrano is iconographically, perhaps, the most complex specimen of this group, and Murray believes that this seal—with music played during the ritual consumption of alcohol—should be connected with the Near-Eastern institution of *marzēaḥ*. This conclusion is entirely convincing. However, it is probable that we are dealing with a mythological

[58] Murray (forthcoming). I am very grateful to Oswyn Murray for sharing information on this unpublished artefact with me and for sending me an excellent photograph of it. See in general Cerchiai and Nava (2008/2009) with fig. 8a.

[59] In general see Buchner and Boardman (1966) and more recently Boardman (1990*b*).

scene, as the composition includes birds whose chthonic symbolism is very likely. Murray is correct in pointing out that we do not know how Greeks and indigenous inhabitants of Italy interpreted this symbolic scene. We can only conclude that they may have considered it an Oriental drinking custom. To my mind, an additional obstacle in accepting this object as testimony for the adoption of the *marzēaḥ* in the West is the fact that the drinking of liquids through long tubes likely alludes to the Oriental imagery of beer consumption, although the amphora occupying a central place in the composition could indicate ritual wine drinking.[60] As with Matthäus's Cretan theory, the seal Murray cites does not provide the proof he seeks for his idea of the adoption of the Phoenician feast in Greek Italy during the eighth century. Although, neither of these hypotheses can be refuted a priori at this point.

Another potential 'Oriental connection' for the reclining feast in Greece may have been the Phrygian and Cypriot royal banquets. Scholars (see Matthäus 1993, 178–179) very cautiously referred to the testimony of the luxurious Phoenician bed of ivory in the famous royal tomb no. 79 on the necropolis of Cypriot Salamis, dated to *c.*700 BC, but also to eighth-century bier-beds from royal *tumuli* P (TumP 155) and MM (TumMM 389) in Gordion. Even if we assume that the Greeks 'picked up' the reclining symposion from the Phrygians in Asia Minor or from Cypriot dynasts, these artefacts, regal beds with very high headboards, once again indicate a profound difference between the feasting habits of Aegean Greeks and their Eastern neighbours. Considering the finds from Cypriot Salamis and Gordion, one can see that the very form of the sofa bed would have set the royal banqueter apart from the other participants of the feast. Therefore, if indeed those rulers dined on the discovered beds, which is far from certain, we would have been dealing with an adoption of the complete set of attributes of the royal banquet similar to the one on the relief of Ashurbanipal in Nineveh, in its original function. Also in these two purely hypothetical cases the chronological objection mentioned above remains valid.[61]

[60] This is also pointed out by Murray (forthcoming). See also Burkert (1991) 9–10, with bibliography. Cf. in general Bottéro (1995).

[61] On the bed from Cypriot Salamis see *Salamis V*, esp. pp. 89–93 along with pls. C, D, E and figs. LXVI–LXXII (generally cf. Karageorghis 1999); on the *tumuli* at Gordion see *Gordion I*, pp. 9, 70, 187–190, 259–269 and fig. 40 and 112.

3.2.3 Symposion and the Levantine *Marzēaḥ*—Parallels and Contrasts

Given the ambiguity of such iconographic or material findings, we ought to systematically compare what we know about Levantine feasts and the symposion.

As previously mentioned, Amos referred to the drinking parties of the inhabitants of Samaria by the term *marzēaḥ*.[62] Although only mentioned by name at one other point in the Hebrew Bible (Jeremiah 16:5),[63] there are several testimonies suggesting this type of feast that may be compared to the Greek symposion. In the aforementioned portion of Jeremiah, whose point of reference is the sack of Jerusalem by the Babylonians in 587 BC, the prophet receives a warning from God not to enter the 'house of mourning' (*bēt marzēaḥ*), as 'no one shall break bread for the mourner, to offer comfort for the dead; nor shall anyone give them the cup of consolation to drink for their fathers or their mothers' (16:7). This thought soon returns in a drastically contrasting form as a ban on entering the 'house of feasting' (*bēt mišteh*), 'to sit with them, to eat and drink' (16:8). Although the word *marzēaḥ* is absent, the association of ritual drinking with funerary rites, and even chthonic cults, is already attested in Isaiah (Isa. 28:7–22). In Jeremiah, the *marzēaḥ* clearly has to do with funerary rites, as well as nuptials, since the joyful 'house of feasting' should most probably be connected with the latter (Jer. 16:8).[64]

In turn, in the Book of Judges (Judg. 14:10–14), whose deuteronomistic redaction most likely took place at more or less the same time as the redaction of Jeremiah, we read about Samson's feast (*mišteh*, not *marzēaḥ*), which lasted for seven days, 'as young men used to do' (14:10).[65] The hero then asks the thirty companions assigned to him as bodyguards by the bride's family the famous riddle about the

[62] See above, pp. 141–143.

[63] Generally cf. a short comm. *ad locc.* (Bright 1965) in *The Anchor Bible* series and, in greater detail, McLaughlin (2001) 184–195. On the Book of Jeremiah see also Blenkinsopp (1997) 163–183, who is in favour of dating the redaction of the whole book in the deuteronomistic tradition to 'not earlier than *c.*560 BC' (ibid., p. 170).

[64] Cf. commentary to this passage in Zevit (2001) 547–549.

[65] Boling (1975) 231, in his commentary *ad loc.*, translates the term *bahūrīm* not simply as 'youths' but as selected 'élite fighters', which is well justified by the continuation of the story (Judg. 14:11).

[66] Cf. Boling (1975) 230 and Niditch (2008) 156–157.

honey and the lion (14:12–14).[66] This passage does not mention the term *marzēaḥ*, but the reference to a drinking party typical for young warriors and the custom of asking convivial riddles has led some scholars to compare the Philistine banquet to the Greek symposion.[67]

The cited biblical passages are of particular significance for our problem, as they are more or less chronologically consistent with the emergence and flourishing of the Greek symposion. However, Near-Eastern extra-biblical textual attestations of the institution of *marzēaḥ* can be observed over a period of about three thousand years.[68] The term already appears in the second half of the third millennium BC in two texts from Ebla (Tell Mardikh),[69] in the thirteenth century BC in a ritual calendar from Emar in Syria,[70] and in *c.*1200 BC in nine texts from Ugarit (Ras-Shamra).[71] A long interval follows,[72] filled with the biblical passages cited above (and the prototypes of the stories they convey before their deuteronomistic redaction), and later on we find the term *marzēaḥ* in a Moabite papyrus (from

[67] See Burkert (1991) 15–16.

[68] All the attestations quoted below have been conveniently collected and broadly commented on recently by McLaughlin (2001) 9–64 (information on editions of the individual texts also therein). *Non vidi:* L. Miralles Maciá, *Marzeah y thíasos. Una institución convivial en el Oriente Próximo Antiguo y el Mediterraneo* (Madrid, 2007). Of older literature about *marzēaḥ* see also Eissfeldt (1969); Greenfield (1974); Friedman (1979/80). Cf. also King (1989); McLaughlin (1991); Botterweck, Ringgren, & Fabry (1998) 10–15 (the entry '*marzēaḥ*' by H.-J. Fabry). Most recently, from an interesting comparative perspective, see López-Ruiz (2013). On offerings and feasts in Syro-Palestine in general see Amadasi Guzzo (1988).

[69] Texts I A 1–2 (*TM* 75.G.1372 [no. 810 in the catalogue by Pettinato 1979] and 75.G.1443 XI.1 3 [no. 881 in catalogue by Pettinato 1979]) in McLaughlin (2001) p. 9–11.

[70] Text I C 1 (*Emar* 466) in McLaughlin (2001) p. 33 –34.

[71] McLaughlin 2001, p. 11, 33–texts I B 1 a–d (Akkadian texts: *RS* 14.16; 15.88; 15.70; 18.01) and I B 2 a–e (alphabetic Ugaritic: *CAT* 4.399; 4.642; 3.9; 1.114; 1.21.II). On Ugaritic cult associations see e.g. Eissfeldt (1969).

[72] In the archaeological material, the existence of this type of feast can be postulated, though. Ayelet Gilboa kindly shared with me her hypothesis about an eleventh-century courtyard house in Tel Dor. '[I]n the debris of the second floor, there is a totally unusual concentration of decorated vessels used for drinking/serving, and an exceptionally large cooking pot, and an extremely unusual concentration of game bones and horns (deer, gazelle, fox and more—and not the meaty parts of these animals, the most plausible interpretation would be hunting trophies). So what we reconstruct is some socially significant drinking in a masculine ambience. Whether this may indicate a *marzeah* (or some other male recreational activity) can, of course, be debated' (*per litteras*, 8 Nov. 2012).

Tell Iktanu?) from the late seventh or early sixth century BC (the authenticity of this text is questioned by some scholars);[73] on an Aramaic Jewish *ostrakon* from Elephantine from the fifth century BC;[74] a Phoenician *phialē* from the beginning of the fourth century BC;[75] a Phoenician inscription from the fourth or third century BC, called the 'Tariff of Marseilles';[76] a Phoenician inscription from the Piraeus from the mid third century BC;[77] two Nabataean inscriptions from the first century BC—from Petra[78] and from Awdat (Oboda);[79] several Palmyrene *tesserae* (first–third century AD);[80] a few inscriptions from Palmyra dated to the period from the first decades of the common era to the last quarter of the third century AD;[81] a couple of rabbinic texts from the first centuries of the common era;[82] and finally on a mosaic map from a Byzantine church at Madaba, Jordan (sixth century AD).[83]

The dossier of the *marzēaḥ* is therefore very rich, but even setting aside the numerous problems with the chronology, reconstruction, and interpretation of the individual texts, a fundamental question arises as to whether we have the right to compare information obtained from very different Near-Eastern communities over a time span of three thousand years. John L. McLaughlin recognized some puzzling analogies that connect nearly all the aforementioned

[73] II A in McLaughlin (2001) 35–36, published by Bordeuil & Pardee (1990) 49–68, see esp. pp. 55–56. On the problem of authenticity of this papyrus (it is part of a private collection and to date scholars only have had access to black-and-white photographs of it) see ibid., pp. 65–68.

[74] No. II B (= *COS III* 87D, with comm. by B. Porten): McLaughlin (2001) 36–37 (*ostrakon* 35468a from the Egyptian Museum in Cairo).

[75] Text II C 1 in McLaughlin (2001) 37–38, published by N. Avigad and J. C. Greenfield, 'A Bronze *Phialē* with a Phoenician Dedicatory Inscription', *Israel Exploration Journal* 32 (1982), 118–128 (*non vidi*).

[76] McLaughlin (2001) 38–42: II C 2 (= *KAI* 69 = *ANET*^{3} 657 = *COS I* 98, with comm. by D. Pardee). The inscription most probably comes from the temple of Baal Ṣapḥon in Carthage.

[77] Text II C 3 (= *KAI* 60) in McLaughlin (2001) 42–44 (an additional Greek passage from this inscription is *IG* II^2 2946).

[78] II D 1 in McLaughlin (2001) 45 (Nabataean inscription no. 73 in Dalman 1912, 92–94).

[79] McLaughlin (2001) 45–48: II D 2 (= *COS II* 43), published by Negev (1963) 113–117 (inscription no. 10).

[80] Texts no. II E 1: McLaughlin (2001) 48–50 (*PAT* 2033, 2036–2041, 2279, 2807).

[81] McLaughlin (2001) 51–61: II E 2–9 (*PAT* 0991; 0326; 0265; 1357; 0316; 2743; 1358; 2812). In general cf. Gawlikowski (1971).

[82] Plentiful attestations in rabbinical literature are collected by McLaughlin (2001) 61–64 as texts no. II F.

[83] McLaughlin (2001) 64 (no. II G).

attestations of the *marzēaḥ*. Walter Burkert likewise considered it sensible to build a kind of model of this institution.[84] For his part, McLaughlin identified three constitutive traits of the Semitic *marzēaḥ*, present (or at least suggested) in almost all the texts throughout three millennia: (1) excessive consumption of alcohol; (2) the élite status of the participants; and (3) a religious context.[85] These three traits bring to mind the Greek symposion,[86] but let us note that we are dealing with a description so general that many other institutions and types of feasts in various cultures of the world would easily conform.

Because of the significant changes which this institution must have undergone over the centuries, one should focus on the testimonies that pre-date, or are concurrent with, the existence of the Greek symposion, in order to add other, more specific, points to the list of key, 'universal' features of the *marzēaḥ*.[87] First of all, a leader (*rb*) of the institution of *marzēaḥ* is clearly present in our sources,[88] and sometimes also other 'functionaries', including a treasurer.[89] Second,

[84] Cf. Burkert (1991) 9–10.

[85] McLaughlin (2001) 65–70, 214 and *passim*.

[86] Cf. also McLaughlin (2001) 216.

[87] Later documents are of secondary importance here. I will refer to such sources in my notes only after citing the more relevant material. Let me also stress that I will hereafter use the term *marzēaḥ* in a generic, and not specific, sense, encompassing diverse and local specific Levantine masculine drinking habits and their accompanying organized social institutions that earlier scholarship used to compare with the Greek symposion. Nevertheless, the texts mentioning the term *marzēaḥ* will feature prominently in my reasoning.

[88] See e.g. the Ugaritic text *CAT* 3.9, l. 11–12. This official's predecessor was the 'overseer' of the *marzēaḥ* from Ebla (*TM* 75.G.1443 XI.1–3), who received festive garments on the occasion of the *marzēaḥ* festival—as did other persons, probably some functionaries of a different institution of this kind (*TM* 75.G.1372). Cf. also a few *tesserae* from Palmyra (*PAT* 2033, 2036–2041) and Palmyrene inscriptions *PAT* 0265, l. 4; *PAT* 1357, l. 4; *PAT* 0316, l. 1; *PAT* 0991; *PAT* 1358 and *PAT* 2812. It appears from the Palmyrene inscription *PAT* 2743, ll. 2–6 that the function of *rb marzēaḥ* was held for at least a year.

[89] This is most likely attested in a late document: the Palmyrene inscription *PAT* 0991, ll. 4–10.

[90] For instance, we hear of a house of 'men of [a certain] *marzēaḥ*' in Ugarit (*RS* 15.88, ll. 4–8; *RS* 15.70); a certain Šamūmānu endowed members of his *marzēaḥ* with a banquet hall in his own home (*CAT* 3.9, ll. 1–10) pledging to pay a fine, should he ever wish to rescind the donation. The latter suggests the existence of a common fund for this *marzēaḥ*, which is most likely suggested by a different part of the same text (*CAT* 3.9, ll. 12–17). Also in Ugarit (*RS* 18.01) a 'vineyard of the Hurrian Ishtar' was divided between 'men of the *marzēaḥ* of [the village of] Aru' and 'men of the *marzēaḥ* of [the village of] Siyannu'. Also there 'men of [a certain] *marzēaḥ*' held arable land (*CAT* 4.399). In turn, legal disputes over a 'house of *marzēaḥ*' are attested in a Moabite

a *marzēaḥ* usually owned property (land, a vineyard, a building, as well as certain funds).[90] And third, there is a close connection between the *marzēaḥ* and the cult of various deities.[91] McLaughlin excludes the possibility of associating the Semitic feast with funerary rites and chthonic cults for texts older than the biblical testimonies,[92] but on this point his analysis seems unconvincing. In point of fact, there seems to be such a connection starting with the time of the Book of Jeremiah.

There are also several other noteworthy aspects that McLaughlin has not sufficiently emphasized. The *marzēaḥ* indeed involves the ritual consumption of alcohol with the intention of getting drunk but, in practically all the texts that elaborate on the topic, one can see that drinking went hand in hand with the consumption of other foods, particularly large amounts of the finest cuts of meat.[93] To my knowledge, none of our sources state that *marzēaḥ* took place during the night, and we would expect the prophetic texts of the Bible, which condemned this social practice, to stigmatize such behaviour had it taken place. Thus, it seems justified to conclude that the *marzēaḥ* was organized during the day. Curiously, in a different passage from Amos (4:1), ritualized aristocratic drinking is practised by a group

papyrus (McLaughlin 2001, 35–36: text no. II A), and an Aramaic ostrakon from a Jewish garrison on Elephantine (*COS III* 87D) concerns a quarrel over funds of a *marzēaḥ*. Later on, also the text of a Phoenician inscription from the Piraeus (*KAI* 60) assumes the existence of common funds of *marzēaḥ* members.

[91] See, e.g., a Phoenician *phialē* with an inscription in the first person: 'two bowls, we are a gift to the *marzēaḥ* of Shamash' (McLaughlin 2001, 37–38: text no. II C 1). Cf. also the Akkadian dictionary, Soden (1972) *s.v. marza'u*.

[92] McLaughlin (2001) 70–79 and *passim*. However, cf. e.g. Lipinski (2000) 639–640, with bibliography. The connection with the sphere of chthonic cults and funerary rites is generally one of the most controversial problems in research on the *marzēaḥ*. See e.g. the entry by H.-J. Fabry, '*marzēaḥ*', in Botterweck, Ringgren, and Fabry (1998) 10–11, on the etymology of this word: from the root *rzh*: '*cry aloud*'; or *rzh* II: '*join together*'; or, perhaps, in connection with the Arabic *razaha*: '*collapse, sink to the ground*'? (Cf. also ibid., p. 12). The first of the etymologies suggested by scholars may support the hypothesis proposing such a connection, but the others cannot.

[93] See esp. Amos 6:4 (with comm. by McLaughlin 2001, 80–109) and a Ugaritic mythological text about the banquet of the god El (*CAT* 1.114, ll. 1–2, but only the drinking is discussed farther on; cf. also *KAI* 1.1.iv., esp. ll. 1–2 and 28–32, although this text is reconstructed on the basis of our story about El's feast), but it is also indicated by the connection between the 'men of [a certain] *marzēaḥ*' and making animal offerings (cf. *Emar* 466, ll. 85–94; later on, cf. Phoenician inscription from Marseilles, *KAI* 69, l. 16 and *passim* and the Palmyrene inscription *PAT* 0991, ll. 3–4).

[94] Cf. analysis of McLaughlin (2001) 109–119.

of distinguished women in the society of Samaria.[94] It therefore seems that the *marzēaḥ* may have been an institution for both males and females, though it is not at all clear if the men and women of the élite ever feasted together.[95] In addition, the participants in the *marzēaḥ* sometimes dined in a reclining position, as in Amos (Amos 6:4),[96] but sometimes they were evidently seated during the feast.[97]

A key parallel between the symposion and the *marzēaḥ* is, however, the luxurious nature of both institutions, which manifested itself in the consumption of large amounts of wine, the use of perfumes,[98] and also in the enjoyment of cultural entertainment, such as music, singing, or sympotic riddles—although these aspects are apparent only, if I am not mistaken, in Amos (6:5–6) and in the story of Samson in Judges (14:12–14). Nevertheless, this similarity does not seem to constitute a sound argument in favour of a close historical connection between the *marzēaḥ* and the symposion. It is sufficient to recall the memorable pages of Johan Huizinga's *Homo ludens* to remember that agonistic pastimes, including riddle contests (as well as 'slanging matches', *cours d' amour*, etc.), play an important role in many cultures, including, if not especially, at the table.[99] Heavy drinking, dancing, and the reciting of poetry are quite obviously common elements of élite banquets in many cultures worldwide.

In fact, we owe the identification of the *marzēaḥ* with the symposion to the ancient Palmyrenes, in whose bilingual inscriptions the designation of the leader of the *marzēaḥ* is translated into Greek as

[95] In the Book of Hosea we find an association between drunkenness and prostitution (Hos. 4:18–19), which may bring to mind the role of hetaerae in the Greek symposion, but McLaughlin (2001) 153, correctly separates those two aspects from the mentioned passage in the Bible.

[96] See also the Levantine iconography of the reclining feast, discussed above, Section 3.2.2.

[97] Cf. e.g. the Ugaritic text *KAI* 1.114, ll. 14–15 (see below) and Jer. 16:8. Cf. also Lipinski (2000) 640, on the imagery of a funerary stele, which a scholar associates with the institution of *marzēaḥ*.

[98] It is noteworthy that the passage from Amos 6:6, which mentions the abundance of wine and perfume, is of a topical nature. The same image appears in Ps. 23[22]: 5.

[99] See generally Huizinga (1967) [1938], esp. Chaps. III, VII, and VIII.

[100] See McLaughlin (2001) 59–60. The fact, which is often brought up by scholars, that the Septuagint most likely translates the term *marzēaḥ* very accurately, by the Greek word *thiasos*, 'religious community' (Jer. 16:5), is irrelevant to my research on the symposion. It only gains significance in the light of Oswyn Murray's theory, which perceives *hetaireiai*, fratries, and other forms of non-kinship organizations in the Greek world in hypothetical historical connection with the symposion.

symposiarchos.[100] However, this was the effect of an anachronistic usage in the time of the Roman Empire. It may be significant that the term *symposion* most likely denoted a hall for ritual public banquets at Palmyra.[101] In turn, the Nabataeans identified Dushara, the divine patron of one of the *marzēaḥ* at Awdat (*COS* II 43),[102] with Dionysus, but in this case we are dealing with a late tradition, which undoubtedly came into being after this region had already came into contact with the Graeco-Roman civilization.

Already at this stage of my argument, it is clear that the basic distinguishing traits of the symposion (rigorous separation of food from drink, nocturnal dining, and assembling in a strictly male group) were alien to the Levantine tradition.[103] In the face of these differences, I would suggest a rethinking of the hypothetical connections between the symposion and the Levantine *marzēaḥ* in the light of the previously discussed typologies of forms of banqueting (0.4 and 1.4.2).

Let us begin by observing that the *marzēaḥ* was a festive occasion on the community's calendar of rituals or a religious festival—and lasted several days.[104] The Emar calendar included 'a month of *marzēaḥ*' (*Emar* 466, ll. 85–90).[105] The institution of *marzēaḥ* was sometimes modified by the name of the deity in whose praise its members assembled. The *marzēaḥ* was also a group with strictly defined membership criteria (sometimes it united holders with similar functions,

[101] Cf. Starcky (1949) esp. 59–62. One of the dedicatory inscriptions described by Jean Starcky refers to the founding of an 'altar and symposion' by an anonymous benefactor of the Palmyrene community (ibid., p. 60). Such an understanding of the term *marzēaḥ* (= *bēt marzēaḥ*) appears already in the Moabite papyrus of the seventh or sixth century BC (see above pp. 151–152 with n. 73).

[102] McLaughlin (2001) 45–346: text no. II D 2.

[103] Burkert (1991) 19, notices one more important difference. Ugaritic texts often mention mixing the beverage, but according to the Bible, in times chronologically closer to the Greek symposion, mixing wine with water was a symbol of decline (Isa. 1:22).

[104] In our late sources, a Palmyrene *tessera PAT* 2279 mentions the fifth day of a certain *marzēaḥ*. In turn, a Phoenician inscription from the Piraeus (*KAI* 60, l. 1) talks about a 'fourth day of *marzēaḥ* in the fourteenth year of the Sidonians'.

[105] i.e. most probably, the month in which the *marzēaḥ* festival(s) regularly took place.

[106] Cf. McLaughlin (2001) 59–60.

[107] This is explicitly stated in a Ugaritic royal document *RS* 15.88, and another royal document, *RS* 15.70, mentions that the vizier donated certain buildings 'to men of [certain] *marzēaḥ*', their descendants and sons. Lists of members of *marzēaḥ* with their fathers' names, very common in official documents, also seem to suggest this. In Ugarit a group of 'men from [a certain] *marzēaḥ*' included, amongst others, a number of brothers belonging to one family (*RS* 14.16, l. 5–6 and 10).

like the priests of a given community),[106] and membership was most likely hereditary.[107] Members of such a group, who—as already mentioned—managed common property, also jointly undertook legal actions and acted officially as a group in contacts with authorities (e.g. the king)[108] and in cult-related circumstances (e.g. making offerings required by law).[109] What is more, there were officially many such permanent and, as it seems, closed groups in any given community, which seem to have entered into conflicts leading to court disputes.

The application of the typologies of Grignon or Dietler to the realities of the *marzēaḥ* must raise doubts of the same nature as the objections to the very construction of a model of this institution. However, the use of these typologies would allow us to view the *marzēaḥ* in a very interesting light. They show that, at least in some aspects, the Levantine banquet fits the 'pure' type or category of banquet much better than the symposion.

In Grignon's classification, the *marzēaḥ* would be a typical example of a non-domestic banquet, and within this category it is, unlike the symposion, an institutional banquet that does not thereby lose the qualities of a 'leisure feast'. From a different viewpoint, it can be classified as an example of exceptional commensality, taking place on clearly defined festival days. Whereas a symposion, as we have seen, can accompany a festival of a small or large community, but may also convene without a specific occasion.[110] The *marzēaḥ* is also an example of a 'segregative' or 'exclusive' feast. For understanding of the function of the symposion, it is crucial to realize its somewhat paradoxical nature: a segregative banquet that integrated individuals who had previously been social 'outsiders'.

[108] See the series of Ugaritic documents listed in the previous footnote.

[109] Cf. e.g. a Phoenician inscription from Marseilles (*KAI* 69, ll. 16–17) and a Palmyrene inscription *PAT* 0991, ll. 15–17.

[110] The latter difference well demonstrates the special nature of the symposion. As opposed to the year-round production of beer (dominant in Mezopotamia in this period; cf. Bottéro 1995), wine making only takes place at a specific point in the vegetation cycle (cf. Burkert 1991, 8). Hence, in many cultures, festivals associated with the preparation or first consumption of wine in a given year are of paramount importance. We can suspect that the place of *marzēaḥ* rituals on the calendar was closely connected to such festivals. The detachment of the Greek symposion from festivities determined by the vegetation cycle of the grapevine (as demonstrated, the example of Athenian Anthesteria is an exception) makes its non-institutional character even more manifest.

On the grounds of the theories of Dietler and Hayden, the *marzēaḥ* is undoubtedly a 'diacritical' ('distinctive') banquet, which is well accentuated by the fact that the commensal group had a separate house or rooms, in which they regularly conducted their meetings. Likewise, the group had a separate, autonomous treasury. Importantly, an ordinary sympotic group in Greece usually had neither of these.

Setting aside the typologies of Grignon and Dietler, let us note that unlike the symposion, the *marzēaḥ* did not entail a strict equality between members of the group—its 'diacritical' nature notwithstanding. The latter seems to have been acutely hierarchical, reflecting the actual relations of power and prestige in a given community.[111] If we add that membership in the group was hereditary, then the most important features of the symposion will turn out to be absent. It was also not a dynamic occasion for the integration or negative selection of members of the local élite, or a situation radically detached from the world of everyday social, political, and economic relationships. Furthermore, it was not an occasion in which fragile hierarchies formed ad hoc, based on conventional, symbolic grounds, usually through rivalry in cultural skills.[112]

* * *

All the functional and structural differences between the Levantine feasting habits and the symposion, discussed above, by no means reduce the likelihood that, before the age of the 'Cup of Nestor', the Greeks drew inspiration from certain commensal customs they considered appealing—ones they experienced first-hand in the Middle East or only learned about indirectly. Due to these differences, however, the theories that consider such inspirations a decisive factor in the formation of the symposion are highly unlikely. I would venture to conclude that none of the constitutive traits of the *marzēaḥ* directly correspond to any of the constitutive traits of the symposion, and the similarities between the two institutions are limited to utterly trivial phenomena. In this situation, it is not enough to prove the possibility

[111] This difference was strongly emphasized by Burkert (1991) 14 (cf. ibid., p. 8).

[112] If we compare the symposion to its closest Levantine counterpart, the feast of Samson in Judges (called *mišteh*, not *marzēaḥ*, though) we will clearly see how far-reaching the differences between the two really are. During the seven-day feast, the biblical hero hopes to defeat the thirty young Philistines with the power of his riddle. However, in striking contrast to the symposion's 'rules of the game', the prize in this competition is not a conventional symbol of prestigious victory, but a very specific material gain—'thirty linen garments and thirty festal garments' (Judg. 14:13).

of a commensal 'cultural transfer' between the Aegean and Levant in the ninth or eighth century BC, as some scholars have done, which was not, as one may recall, an easy task in itself.

Scholars arguing in favour of the decisive influence of the *marzēaḥ* on the Greek symposion consider such a hypothetical 'cultural transfer' as parallel to the adoption by the Greeks of the alphabetical script from the Near-East. In my opinion, this is an error in reasoning. Unlike the Greek adoption of a specific set of technical skills when they borrowed the alphabetical script from the Levant (though this did not necessarily happen on Levantine soil), the hypothetical adoption of a Levantine drinking habit (or even of the Levantine convivial institution allegedly called *marzēaḥ*) would involve intrinsic, context-specific social customs and systems of values operating in different social structures and relations of power. Even if we were able to definitively confirm the influence of the Near-Eastern *marzēaḥ* on the complex social institution of the symposion (as one recalls, we cannot), in order to explain the origins of the Greek aristocratic banquet we would have to understand the underlying internal determinants of the Greek, or more specifically Aegean, background in which it took shape.[113] The following chapters of this book are devoted to attempts to examine this historical background.

3.3 THE RECLINING BANQUET AND EARLY SYMPOTIC ARCHITECTURE

3.3.1 Archilochus, Kallinos, and the Chronology of the Reclining Banquet in the Aegean

As William J. Slater recalled twenty years ago, 'the fashion for the reclining dinner party remained so firmly a symbol of classical culture that in its disappearance somewhere in France, fourteen centuries later [i.e. after its appearance in the Greek world—M.W.], we can see with

[113] It seems of significance to me that W. Burkert, one of the greatest supporters of the theory of the profound 'Orientalization' of Greek culture at the dawn of the Archaic period, after a thorough analysis of the available material did not find traces of Eastern origins in the Greek symposion and suggested instead that its sources should be sought in the Aegean of the Dark Ages (or earlier). See Burkert (1991) esp. 17–19.

[114] Generally, on reclining feasts in later Antiquity, see Dunbabin (2003) 175–202. On the last representatives of the ancient élites banqueting in a reclining position,

some justice the final extinguishing of the living society of antiquity, so final indeed that it was left to Renaissance scholars to discover that the ancients lay down at all' (Slater 1991*b*, 1).[114]

Scholars of the Renaissance were particularly interested in the Roman triclinium. Their interest likewise fell on the Roman and Etruscan, more generally Italian, style of dining in a reclining position, which emerged under the influence of Greek examples. I presented the place of the reclining feast in Greek commensal imagery in a previous section (2.3.1), and I critically surveyed the Oriental material referred to by scholars who seek to prove the early, eighth-century, adoption of this custom by Greeks from the Middle East (3.2.2). Below, I will approach this topic one last time, now observing it from the standpoint of the material culture of the Greeks and the inhabitants of Italy who imitated Greek models. I will investigate the chronology of the appearance of the motif of the reclining feast in the earliest Greek literary texts, in Greek and Italian iconography, as well as the oldest, hypothetical traces of the symposion, and the reclining feast in Greek architectural material.

As recently as the 1980s, there was no doubt as to the timing of the appearance of the reclining feast in Greece. A series of Corinthian *kraters*, the oldest of which is the famous 'krater of Eurytios' from the Louvre (no. E 635, *c.*620–600 BC), points to the emergence of this iconographic motif at the turn of the seventh and sixth century BC.[115] Information on another early source is provided by Pausanias, who claims that at the temple of Hera in Olympia he saw an ex-voto of the tyrant of Corinth Kypselos—a cedar chest, painted and carved in relief

see Rossiter (1991) esp. 204–208 (in the western part of the Empire, this custom survived until the fifth century AD in feasts organized in older buildings with the necessary facilities, and in the East it was still common in the sixth century). On Renaissance studies on ancient banquets, cf. briefly above, p. 1 with n. 1.

[115] See Fehr (1971) esp. 26–31 (with a catalogue of early Corinthian vases with representations of reclining feasts: ibid., pp. 138–139 ['Typus M (3)' and 'Typus M (2)']) and Dentzer (1982) 76–86 (V Co no. 2–5); cf. also Dentzer (1971). See also Schmitt Pantel (2011) Annex no. 5 (pp. 565–566), vases nos. 1–6, with a detailed description of the iconography of individual *kraters*.

[116] Cf. in general Maddoli & Saladino (2007) 293–294 and 302–303, also Snodgrass (2006*f*) [2001]. *Non vidi*: R. Splitter, *Die 'Kypseloslade' in Olympia: Form, Funktion und Bildschmuck. Eine archäologische Rekonstruktion* (Mainz, 2000).

[117] My doubts are aroused, particularly, by the large number of hexametric captions to particular scenes and by the ease with which Pausanias deciphered them (V 18, 2 and 4; V 19, 3; 4 and 5). However, Pausanias himself suggests that the *dipinti*

(*larnax*: V 17, 5–19, 9), which showed, *inter alia*, a reclining Dionysus dining in a cave with a golden cup in hand, while dressed in a long chiton (V 19, 6 *ad fin.*).[116] If we consider Pausanias's account reliable,[117] and regard this artefact (which is unpreserved, after all) as authentic, then, remaining in the circle of Corinthian art, we will obtain a date that is roughly consistent with the one attested by the Corinthian *kraters* that have been mentioned.[118] More or less contemporary to these objects is also a passage from the Spartan poet Alkman (fr. 19 Page = 11 Calame; tr. D. A. Campbell), which may point to the existence of a custom of dining in the reclining position in Sparta: 'Seven couches and as many tables (κλίναι μὲν ἑπτὰ καὶ τόσαι τράπεσδαι) laden with poppy-seed loaves and linseed and sesame, and chrysocolla in (full?) bowls'.[119]

There is no doubt that all these attestations provide us with only a *terminus ante quem* for the introduction of this custom in Greece. We must assume that it was present sometime before it became manifest in vase painting and poetry. The question is therefore how long the reclining banquet could have 'covertly' existed among the Greeks. Traditionally, it was assumed that this period could not have been very long. Therefore, the rise of this custom should be dated to some point in the seventh century BC—and closer to the middle, if not the end. In 1994, these convictions were challenged by Oswyn Murray, who pointed to the testimony of two seventh-century Greek poets: Kallinos and Archilochus (Murray 1994, 52–53).

may be later than the Chest of Kypselos (V 19, 9 *ad fin.*), and in his study of the inscriptions he could have had the help of local guides (cf. e.g. V 18, 6).

[118] If we consider this *larnax* an original from the time of the Cypselid tyranny at Corinth (a traditional dating supported by a great majority of scholars today (cf. Salmon 1984, 186 and Maddoli and Saladino 2007, 293) is 657–584/3 BC. A later dating (620–*c.*550 BC) was suggested by Will 1955, 364–440). Due to the chronology of the temple of Hera, which was most probably erected at the end of the seventh century, the *larnax* could not have originated in the time of Cypselus himself, but must have been a votive offering of one of his successors (as also Pausanias suggests, V 17, 5), most likely Periander, in the early sixth century. Maddoli and Saladino (2007) 294, even consider the possibility that the chest had already appeared in the temple after the fall of tyranny in Corinth.

[119] A thorough commentary to this fragment is provided by Calame, *ad loc*. Recently cf. Nafissi (1991) esp. 214–216 and Rabinowitz (2000) esp. 121–122. Guarducci (1962) 274, believed she had found evidence of reclining at a feast in a certain place of the *Hymn to Demeter* (ll. 342–344), dated to the late seventh or early sixth century. However, the poet undoubtedly meant a marriage bed in its (unfulfilled) erotic function, not a banqueting couch.

[120] On the 'politics of exhortation' in archaic Greek poetry see the interesting work of Irwin (2005) *passim*.

Fr. 1 W^2 of Kallinos of Ephesos, dated more or less to the middle of the seventh century, offers a beautiful exhortation (ll. 1–4; tr. J. M. Edmonds):[120] 'How long will ye lie idle? (*Μέχρις τέο κατάκεισθε*;) When, young men, will ye show a stout heart? Have ye no shame of sloth before them that dwell round about you? Purpose ye to sit in peace (*ἐν εἰρήνῃ δὲ δοκεῖτε | ἧσθαι*), though the land is full of war?' It is worth mentioning that Richard Reitzenstein was the first scholar to propose a sympotic interpretation of this fragment.[121] In his first exhaustive study from 1978, Gennaro Tedeschi suggested that although the poet undoubtedly emphasizes the laziness of the young men whom he addresses, the verb *κατάκειμαι* ('lie down') is used in a technical sense and denotes reclining at a symposion (Tedeschi 1991*a* [1978]). Tedeschi pointed out that the generic, metaphorical meaning of this verb ('to be idle', 'to loiter') is unattested before the time of Xenophon (*Anab.* III 1, 14), but this *argumentum ex silentio* is not strong, considering the fragmentary preservation of archaic literature.[122] However, according to Ewen Bowie, who accepts Tedeschi's hypothesis, if this poem were created with a sympotic context in mind, 'it becomes hard to suppose that *κατάκεισθε* has only a metaphorical sense of "lie idle"—though this remains possible—rather than alluding, by its sense "recline", to the posture of the sympotic audience' (Bowie 1990, 223). But to adopt this interpretation we must, like Oswyn Murray, interpret the phrase in line 3 ('to sit in peace') 'as traditional rather than as a literal reference to sitting' (Murray 1994, 52).[123]

Meanwhile, it seems to me that the two verbs used by the poet to express the same charge against the 'youths' cannot be treated differently and in separation from one another. When interpreted together, the two words apparently refer to any kind of idleness condemned by

[121] Reitzenstein (1893) 46 with n. 2.

[122] As rightly noted by Bowie (1990) 223.

[123] The technical meaning of the verb *κατάκειμαι* (but not *ἧσθαι*) is also adopted by Bartol (1999) 200–204. It must be kept in mind that underage youths (certainly not the 'young men' of this poem, already fit for military service) should be seated at a symposion, so in a sympotic context we could, in fact, expect also the second verb to have a technical meaning. Despite the testimony of *Theogn.* 1058, I cannot agree with the notion to consider the 'neighbours' (*ἀμφιπερικτίονας*) in Kallinos' elegy as another technical sympotic term, to be understood as 'fellow banqueters' (thus Bartol 1999, 203). I believe that the conventional character of the poet's call to arms (see below, n. 126) rather suggests that the 'fellow citizens' of Kallinos' 'young men' are meant in general.

[124] Cf. also *Il.* XXIV 403.

the narrator of this poem. In the *Iliad* (XIII 252–253) 'sitting' in one's own tent (ἧσθαι ἐνὶ κλισίῃσι) was in direct opposition to taking part in battle.[124] In the *Odyssey,* the banqueters are requested once in a while to go home and rest, having feasted in abundance (VII 188: νῦν μὲν δαισάμενοι κατακείετε οἴκαδ' ἰόντες).[125] In both of the cited passages from Homeric poems there is a contrast between serious activities and idleness or rest. I believe the meaning in Kallinos' poem was the same.

This does not mean that the sympotic interpretation of the entire poem should be called into question—on the contrary. However, I believe that the poet's words would have lost much of their power if he had alluded to the symposion's technical aspects in a sympotic context. This image would not only have been inappropriate in such a context, but it would have brought about results contrary to its intentions, as the symposion (and by extension the custom of reclining during the feast, if such a custom was already present at this point) was a favoured pastime of the élite and a key status marker for aristocratic youths in Ephesos and throughout the Greek world. In this situation, I think it would be best to assume that the call to war is directed conventionally at any youths (sitting idle or lying down for whatever reason), besides the *hic et nunc* of the original sympotic audience of the poet—even if Kallinos did indeed want to appeal to the close circle of his commensal companions to fight in defence of their homeland.[126] In other words, I do not believe that this fragment offers unambiguous testimony to the existence of the reclining banquet in Greek Asia Minor in Kallinos' time.

[125] See e.g. *Od.* XVIII 408 and 419. All of the above passages in Homer are also recalled by Murray (1994) 52–53, but his interpretation is radically different.

[126] The general notion expressed here by the poet (one perhaps developed in the lost part of the poem) might have been similar to the message of Tyrtaeus' fr. 10 W^2 (ll. 15–32), which calls out in the first line for young men to fight because, unlike for old men, it is fitting for them to die on the battlefield. Also Tyrtaeus' elegy was most likely meant to be delivered during a feast (see Bowie 1990, 224—229; cf. also generally Bowie 1986). I suspect that, in our elegy, Kallinos spoke in the name of the older citizens in a conventional manner, and for the perception of this poem it was irrelevant whether there were youths among older citizens or not at the symposion in which it was delivered for the first time. On the associations between Kallinos and Tyrtaeus see also Bartol (1999) in her commentaries to both fragments. On the links between Kallinos' and Tyrtaeus' exhortations and the Homeric model, cf. also Irwin (2005), esp. 46–57, with cited bibliography.

According to Murray, another testimony to familiarity with the custom of reclining at a feast may be the famous fr. 2 W^2 of Archilochus, which ends with the powerful phrase . . . *πίνω δ' ἐν δορὶ κεκλιμένος*. The problem is that there is no consensus among scholars as to how this whole elegy should be understood. Much depends on the meaning of the words, *ἐν δορί*,[127] used as many as three times by the poet in order to create a witty anaphora. The older interpretation of the poem evokes the image of a spear (*dory*), as in J. M. Edmonds' translation: 'In the spear is my kneaded bread, in the spear my Ismarian wine, when I drink I recline on the spear'. Such a reading of this couplet poses grammatical problems.[128] Partly because of this, an alternative solution was proposed. Its supporters understand the word *dory* not as a spear shaft, but as the deck board of a boat or ship.[129] In all three places, *ἐν δορί* would therefore mean 'on a ship'. Oswyn Murray recently provided partial support for the poem's traditional interpretation (*dory* as 'spear', not 'deck board'). In the article I have frequently quoted above, he considers the fragment of Archilochus as a sympotic pun, in which the two paradoxes (the soldier who utters these words finds both the kneaded bread and the wine in his spear, meaning he obtains them in battle) are followed by an *aprosdokēton* ('surprise'), when it turns out that the banqueter sips his wine not reclining on a comfortable couch, but reclining on his spear.[130]

Although I see no decisive arguments for admitting either of the interpretations, I believe that understanding *dory* as 'planks of a deck', and therefore 'of a ship', poses more problems than it solves. Above all else, the image is utterly banal, even platitudinous, depriving us of a

[127] *Δορί* is a poet. *dat. sing.* of *δόρυ*, a form which appears here for reasons of metre.

[128] First of all, it requires us to assume that the last use of *ἐν δορί* stands in a completely different structure to the other two. Second, the usage of *ἐν δορὶ κεκλιμένος* disagrees with the epic *usus*, in which this verb in the dative stands next to the noun without a preposition.

[129] The first to suggest this possibility, widely adopted nowadays, was Davison (1960). Strictly speaking, this meaning appears no earlier than in Aeschylus, *Pers.* 411. Cf., however, e.g. *Il.* XV 410; *Od.* IX 498.

[130] Murray (1994) 53. A fact speaking in favour of the traditional interpretation is also that this was the way the poem must have been interpreted by Hybrias, the author of the *skolion PMG* 909 [*Carmina convivialia* 26 Page] in the fifth or sixth century, if we assume that his work alludes to the couplet by Archilochus.

[131] Given such an understanding of the poem, I imagine the (conventional) circumstances of reciting the poem as follows: the couplet may have constituted a witty response to a poetic statement by a different banqueter, who may have uttered a

witty convivial pun, for which Murray offers many interesting parallels. What does make a great deal of sense is the juxtaposition of the comforts of aristocrats in times of peace with the modest meals eaten on campaigns by a mercenary soldier, like Archilochus himself.[131]

Assuming that Archilochus had a spear and not the deck of a ship in mind, I nevertheless cannot agree with Murray's interpretation. What is the meaning of the phrase 'I drink reclining on my—spear'? Murray offers the following: 'my spear is my (right to the) *symposion*' (Murray 1994, 53). But such an expression seems very risky, even in a paradoxical sympotic poem. I believe that here we should not interpret the verb *klinomai* as '*recline* at meals' (*LSJ*[9] *s.v.* II.4).[132] Instead, the phrase ἐν δορὶ κεκλιμένος is properly understood as a tmesis, and we are in fact dealing with a passive form of the compound verb ἐγκλίνομαι.[133] This eliminates the syntactic problems that have concerned some scholars. A good parallel is provided by lines 77–78 of the sixth book of the *Iliad*, in which the poet introduces an interesting metaphor: the Trojans' and Lykians' wartime toil 'rests' on Aeneas and Hector (πόνος ὔμμι μάλιστα . . . ἐγκέκλιται). According to such an interpretation, Archilochus' poem would still end with an *aprosdokēton*, but one consisting in a change of both meaning and syntax. The first two uses of *en dori* are metaphorical, while the last phrase has a literal meaning: the structure of the first two is *klinomai* with the preposition *en* and a dative, whereas the last one is *enklinomai* with a dative.

It is difficult to say if Archilochus wanted to press the image too hard of a soldier standing watch and leaning on a spear while hastily

conventional praise of sympotic pleasures (like the one in the first verses of Book IX of the *Odyssey*, for which see below, p. 201). The 'poetic persona' of Archilochus's poem would have responded with a series of paradoxes contrasting the ongoing symposion with the imaginable pleasures of army life (cf. also Bowie 1990, 228–229, on the hypothetical sympotic verbal exchange on war and commensal pleasures in *Theogn.* 885–886, 887–888, and perhaps also 889–890). See also below.

[132] *Per analogiam*, for *klinomai* (*LSJ*[9] p.*v.* II.2) cf. also *Odyssey* XVII 96–97, where Penelope sits across from Telemachus comfortably 'lounging in a chair' (ἵζε . . . κλισμῷ κεκλιμένη). Cf. also *Od.* XVII 340.

[133] Its use in the meaning 'to lean on something/someone' is unattested until the classical period (see Xen. *Symp.* 3, 13), but see below.

[134] I would suggest that in the poet's mind, the image of austere but pleasant dining during a military campaign alludes to the description of a modest peasant's feast in Hesiod's *Works and Days* (ll. 588–596). I intend to develop this thought in the future on a different occasion. Cf. generally comm. *ad locc.* in M. L. West's edition.

consuming bread and wine. In any case, we are dealing with a contrast between the formalized, luxurious and leisurely feasting of a symposion and the plain, hasty meal of a campaign—alluded to in a poem that is delivered at a symposion.[134] Like the previously discussed fragment of Kallinos, this poem also provides no arguments in favour of the existence of a reclining banquet in seventh-century Greece.

3.3.2 Chronology of the Reclining Banquet in Non-Greek Italy

The earliest indisputable testimonies of feasting in a reclining position in Italy are plaques from a terracotta frieze of a wealthy residence in Murlo (Poggio Civitate),[135] dated to the beginning of the sixth century BC: the famous *lastre con banchetto*, which depict reclining banqueters holding hemispherical cups similar to the ones known from Assyrian iconography, as well as two-handled cups similar in shape to the typically Greek *skyphoi* or *kotylai*.[136] Made even earlier, perhaps in the last quarter of the seventh century, we also have a lid for a funerary urn in the *impasto* technique that depicts a reclining nude banqueter.[137] However, the oldest representations of ceremonial wine drinking, like the lid of an urn from Montescudaio near Volterra from the second quarter of the seventh century BC, consistently show seated banqueters. On the find from Montescudaio, we see a man seated on a throne and served by a female figure.[138] What is more, both iconography and architectural material indicate that throughout the sixth century, after the appearance of the custom of feasting in the

[135] It should be emphasized at this point that the iconography of the discussed North Syrian seal from Monte Vetrano may, in the best of cases, constitute proof of an awareness of the existence of the Oriental manner of dining in a reclining position, but it is by no means a testimony of the adoption of this custom in Campania or in Italy in general. See above, pp. 148–149.

[136] See e.g. Rathje (1988) 87–88; Rathje (1990) 284–286 and Rathje (1994). Cf. Bartoloni (2003), 208, as well as Murray (forthcoming). Further bibliography on the discussion of this artefact is in Bartoloni (2003) 215. Small (1971) 39–52, moves the dating of the frieze to 575–550 BC.

[137] Tomb no. 23 in Tolle (Chianciano Terme). Cf. Riva (2010) 145 with n. 26. I am indebted to Dr. Corinna Riva for bringing this object to my attention.

[138] See Bartoloni (2003) 201; Riva (2010) 146 with n. 35. For more on this iconographic type (and this style of wine drinking) in Italy see Rathje (1990) 284–285.

[139] Bartoloni (2003) 203.

[140] See Riva (2010) 146 n. 38.

reclining position in Italy, the seated banquet continues in parallel.[139] As late as the sixth century, we still find a baffling combination of the seated and reclining feast in funerary iconography.[140]

Especially noteworthy in this context is tomb no. 15 from Castel di Decima (*c.*720–700 BC, beginning of the Lazio IVA phase, or the early Orientalizing period), the funerary goods of which—their nature and distribution within the burial—were considered proof of the existence of the reclining feast in Latium in the last quarter of the eighth century BC.[141] The tomb contained the skeletal remains of an adult male laid flat on his back. Among the numerous prestigious grave goods essential for interpreting the burial, we have a chariot. But of greater consequence for our present study are objects that were placed in the hands of the deceased and carefully separated from other lavish grave goods. In the man's right hand there was a spear, and in the left a silver cup resembling a Greek *skyphos*, thus far the only such vessel found in the entire necropolis. The tomb's excavators called the object a 'princely cup' (*coppa del principe*), pointing to the analogous combination of weapons and metal sympotic vessels found, for example, in the famous tomb no. 104 in Kyme (plot of Fondo Artiáco) in Italy, which contained the burial of a Greek colonial 'prince'.[142]

However, some scholars went further, stating that the tomb at Castel di Decima may prove that the élites of Latium feasted in the reclining position in that period. Admittedly, it seems that this statement is based solely on a series of rather random associations.[143] It was noted that tomb no. 15 contains, *inter alia*, an interesting blend of imported objects of Greek, Phoenician, and (supposedly) Greek-Phoenician origin: a Phoenician wine amphora and a Phoenician tripod-bowl; a two-handled silver Greek-type goblet; early Proto-Corinthian Thapsos-type *skyphoi*; and finally Proto-Corinthian globular *aryballoi* attributed to the Phoenician workshop at Ialysos on Rhodes. Since the tomb is more or less contemporary with the tomb of the 'Cup of Nestor' at Pithekoussai, in which an equally eclectic assemblage of similar grave goods was found,[144] further

[141] Recently see Bartoloni (2003) 203–209 (with fig. 6.2). Cf. Bartoloni, Cataldi Dini, and Zevi (1982) 265.

[142] Bartoloni (2003) 207; Bartoloni, Cataldi Dini, and Zevi (1982) 265. On the princely tomb no. 104 in Kyme and the interpretation of its grave goods in a sympotic context, see below, p. 263.

[143] See Bartoloni (2003) 204–209.

[144] Cf. above, and below, pp. 252–253.

parallels between the two burials were taken into consideration. Following Oswyn Murray, scholars took it for granted that the epigram on the 'Cup of Nestor' implies the previous adoption of the Middle-Eastern custom of dining in the reclining position. Thus at Castel di Decima, it was assumed that the deceased, who was found holding the 'princely cup' in his hand, was laid to rest in a position resembling the reclining pose of a banqueter.

This conclusion is completely unfounded from a methodological point of view. Although we cannot exclude the possibility that the reclining position had already been adopted at feasts in Latium in this period, the testimony of tomb 15 from Castel di Decima does not constitute an argument to this end.[145] The views of the scholars presented here, concerning this burial, can only be adopted if we accept the entire theory of the rise of the symposion as formulated by Oswyn Murray. Which is to say that, until proven otherwise, we are left with unequivocal testimonies pointing to the emergence of this iconographic type no earlier than the end of the seventh century BC. It is all the more meaningful that the imagery from the Aegean perfectly corresponds in chronology to the material from central Italy. Thanks to this chronological consistency, the conclusion, with respect to the time frame in which the recently popular custom had been adopted in Greece, seems more probable than contending hypotheses.

3.3.3 The Earliest Sympotic Architecture: An Hypothesis

An unambiguous identification of convivial space within the archaeological record becomes possible only around 400 BC, when wealthy Greek houses receive mosaics with recognizable U-shape panels along the walls to fit banqueting couches.[146] In his monumental book, *From Rulers' Dwellings to Temples in Early Iron Age Greece*, Alexander Mazarakis Ainian elaborated a series of 'Criteria for the identification of cult buildings and rulers' dwellings in the Early Iron Age' (Mazarakis Ainian 1997*a*, 270–286). Featuring prominently among these elements that point to sacred and communal meals held in a building was 'the presence of unburnt bones, hearths, sitting

[145] This interpretation, having once entered the academic discourse, is repeated as if it were a proven fact.

[146] See Nevett (2010) 50; cf. Dunbabin (1998) 82–89.

benches, spits, cooking pots and eating and drinking vessels' (ibid., 284). Mazarakis's task proved very laborious, and the results of his analyses, although persuasive on the whole, were far from unambiguous in each particular case. Our present task is perhaps even more difficult, since the main technical features of the symposion—the separation of the meal from the ensuing drinking party and the nocturnal timing of the gathering—are not archeologically traceable. We may a priori assume that even in classical times the same room often housed first the *deipnon* and then the symposion, so traces of meat consumption would be mixed together with those of wine drinking. Next, the majority of rooms in pre-classical Greek houses were multifunctional and served different activities depending on the time of the day, season of the year, weather, and the immediate needs of the inhabitants. A good example of this may be the multifunctional benches used for sleeping, sitting, and also storage in some Early Iron Age (EIA) buildings.[147] Incidentally, before the arrival of specialized *klinai*, the presence of a spacious bench is not on its own indicative of the custom of reclining at a banquet.[148] All this is enough to say that our search for sympotic architecture in 'early Greece' can only be circumstantial, arriving at hypothetical conclusions, at best.

In later times, we may distinguish between at least three separate forums in which symposia could take place: *andrones* in private houses; specialized facilities in sanctuaries; and public *hestiatoria* of a non-religious nature. The situation was much more fluid in EIA Greece. As A. Mazarakis-Ainian has shown, the character of a particular convivial building could evolve from one sphere to another (from rulers' houses to sanctuaries, for example) and in some cases the distinction itself would not be clear-cut (cf. the public and religious functions of a ruler's dwelling). However, for all the problems it involves, the aforementioned threefold distinction may not be totally irrelevant as regards the EIA material. After all, one already finds in Homer testimony to the well-defined opposition between dining in a private house, in principle subdued to the authority of its host, and a public dining-hall that lacks such overwhelming authority. In a

[147] Cf. Mazarakis Ainian (1997*a*) esp. 280–284 and 292–293; Cambitoglou (1970) 304 (see also *Zagora* II.1, 79–88, for unit H19 in Zagora on the island of Andros).

[148] As rightly observed by Nevett (2010) 51–53. See also below, n. 168, for the bench of the Building Theta in Oropos.

[149] Cf., however, Rabinowitz (2004) 107–108.

passage that has strangely eluded the commentators of Homer with respect to its historical implications (*Odyssey* XX 262–267),[149] Telemachus says to his father disguised as a beggar: 'Take your place here and drink your wine in the men's company. I myself will defend you against the blows and the insults of all the suitors. This is not a communal house (δήμιος οἶκος), but it belongs to Odysseus; he acquired it; this makes it mine; and so, you suitors, hold back your spirit for insults and blows, or else there may be a quarrel and fight between us' (tr. R. Lattimore, modified). Ideally, the drunken behaviour imaginable in the *dēmios oikos*—that obviously, among its diverse functions, might conceivably house drinking parties—should be prohibited in the dwelling of a nobleman.

This passage raises a crucial issue. Adam Rabinowitz has pointed to an important problem, as far as potential forums for organizing early symposia are concerned (Rabinowitz 2004, 99–117, esp. 101–104 and 111): the plot of the *Odyssey* makes it difficult to envision a drinking gathering of the kind attested to by the 'Cup of Nestor', featuring wine-intoxication and eroticism, being held in a private house. The very image of the suitors invading the house of Telemachus and insulting the women of his *oikos* should sensitize us to the centrality of such notions as honor and revenge in the worldview of the aristocrats enjoying symposia in 'early Greece'. The modest one-room houses of EIA and early archaic Greece, gathering the whole family under the same roof, were definitely not places where self-respecting noblemen would organize drinking parties that might prove dangerous to the honour of the women of the family. An act of disrespect or insult committed by a drunken diner would have naturally evolved into a bloody vendetta. In which case, one must ask where the Greek élites of the time held their symposia.

One possible answer, which was quickly discarded by its author, has recently been suggested by A. Mazarakis Ainian (Mazarakis Ainian 2007*b*, 166) in an elaboration on the ethnographic parallels from the Marakwet tribe in Kenya, where local two-hut compounds present a consistent pattern of gender or of functional specialization (men vs. women or sleeping vs. cooking activities). Some Geometric compounds in Oropos and in Eretria, to which I will return shortly in more detail, do have two domestic buildings within clearly distinguishable (family?) enclosures. Theoretically, one of them could accommodate nocturnal male feasting, while another would securely house the rest of the family. However, this interpretation is hampered

not so much by the more or less even distribution of some meaningful finds (loom weights, spindle-whorls, drinking pottery, etc.) between buildings in the same compound, but—as we shall see below—by the complex relative chronology of such units. At times, we simply cannot be sure that the 'twin' buildings were in use simultaneously. And for this reason it is best to tackle our problem on a case-by-case basis, not by looking for a plausible general model.

As test cases in my quest for early sympotic architecture, I will only adduce several archaeological sites that provide abundant and relatively clear data. But let me stress that I am not looking for unambiguous architectural traces confirming the existence of the symposion. As we already know, such certainty cannot be hoped for even in later historical periods. All the same, I am persuaded, largely thanks to the testimony of the 'Cup of Nestor', that we may take it for granted that the symposion was a well-established social custom in the LG period. Hence, I will only be looking for plausible settings within our Geometric evidence.

* * *

My first example is a sanctuary. In historical times, the Iria temple on the island of Naxos most probably belonged to Dionysus and Ariadne. As an innovative centre of Greek monumental architecture without interruption between the ninth and the sixth century BC, the site is of paramount importance to our study of early Greek history.[150] During this period, several important experiments in sacral architecture took place there, and I assume that this fact makes this sanctuary representative of advanced architectural phenomena related to ritual dining as well. To the west of the temple, interesting *hestiatoria* were erected adjacent to a simple *propylon* of the sanctuary at the end of the seventh century.[151] They were rebuilt several times beginning in the late sixth century.

The excavations have not been systematically published thus far, so the exact chronology of those buildings is not altogether clear. However, Professor Evangelie Simantoni-Bournia, who studies the Iria

[150] See Lambrinoudakis and Gruben (1987); Gruben (1991/1992); Lambrinoudakis (1991), (1992), and (1994), as well as Ohnesorg (2005) 135–138. In general, cf. also Lambrinoudakis (2001).

[151] Simantoni-Bournia (2002) 277. Some ritual feasting already took place on this spot in the open air in the LH IIIC period (see Simantoni-Bournia 2000, 215–217 and 2002, 275), but one cannot assume a continuity of the cult into the Geometric period. Clear traces of cult activity in the sanctuary begin in the late ninth century BC.

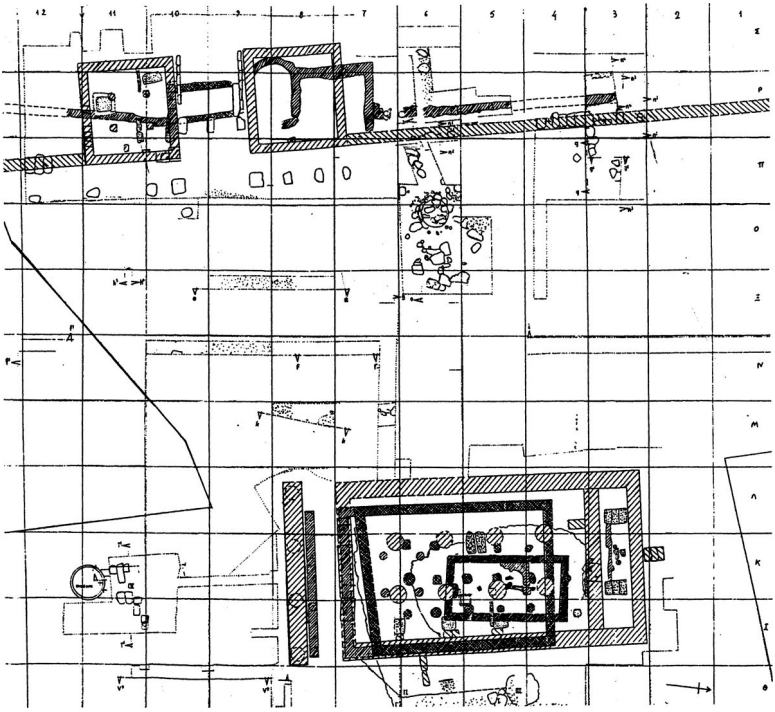


Figure 3.3 Naxos, plan of the Iria sanctuary (state of excavations in 1996). Drawing by E. Simantoni-Bournia. Courtesy of the *Revue archéologique* and E. Simantoni-Bournia

pottery finds, suggests that an apsidal *hestiatorion* adjoined a rectangular one at the end of the seventh century (see Figure 3.3). The former structure was the traditional shape of EIA free-standing buildings in the Aegean, whereas the latter, it seems, may be viewed as a novelty suitable for dining on *klinai*.[152] With the passage of time, both structures were superseded by consecutive rectangular *hestiatoria*.

My first conclusion is that on this innovative site, two ways of dining—seated and reclining—still coexisted in the late seventh century BC. The latter must have been a relatively fresh development,

[152] I am grateful to Dr. John Ma, who was the first to turn my attention to this unusual situation. See Simantoni-Bournia (2000) 215–217 (with fig. 18; cf. also Ohnesorg 2005, 139, fig. 3) and Simantoni-Bournia (2002) 277 (I was lucky to consult Professor Bournia in May 2003; she also gave me some additional pieces of information *per litteras* on 4 January 2006).

which incidentally appears in Corinthian vase painting and becomes iconographically visible in non-Greek Italy at roughly the same period.

My second point is related to what can be said about the overall organization of ritual dining in Iria. In general, because of the geography of the sanctuary and the chronology of the cult, Iria fits in with François de Polignac's model of 'frontier sanctuaries', assuring the ritual coherence of the territory of a given political entity (Polignac 1996). In certain historical periods, the sanctuary may have also provided a neutral ground for convening members of neighbouring local communities. Be that as it may, we find abundant traces of sacrificial meals scattered over the entire *temenos* and concentrating, among other things, in the area of the aforementioned dining-rooms. At the same time, the richest deposits are those containing fragments of open-shape ceramic forms, such as *kraters*, *skyphoi*, *kantharoi*, *kotylai*, and cups. Many of the drinking vases were ritually destroyed or ceremonially deposited in a nearby stream.[153] From the third quarter of the eighth century until the Subgeometric period, the favoured votive object there was one class of drinking-and-pouring vessel: the locally produced, black-glazed *kyathos*.[154] Therefore, the importance of ritual drinking parties in the sanctuary seems sufficiently documented.

Their organization may also be scrutinized in some detail. In the times of the so-called 'second temple', i.e. the second half of the eighth century, ritual dining took place in the temple building with the diners sitting on benches along the walls. In the period of the 'third temple', beginning in the early seventh century, dining moved outdoors, before the appearance of the permanent *hestiatoria* at the end of the century. We should note that in the eighth and late seventh century some ceremonial meals were held in relatively compact buildings, no doubt capable of housing only a small part of the participants of local festivities. By way of analogy, I would assume the same situation for the seventh century, postulating some non-

[153] Cf. Coldstream (2003) 332 and Gebhard and Hemans (1992) 19 (sections written by C. Morgan), for the pottery from Isthmia: 'It seems likely that vessels were deliberately broken after use, perhaps as an act of sacralization'. In general, for the ritual dining in this sanctuary between the mid ninth and the early seventh century, see Gebhard and Hemans (1992) *passim*. Cf. also a brilliant paper by Sourvinou-Inwood (1993) on the eighth-century Greek sanctuaries.

[154] Simantoni-Bournia (2002) 277–278 (quotation on p. 277); cf. Simantoni-Bournia (2000) 219.

permanent structures such as tents or huts, perhaps periodically erected during important festivals and then replaced by solid apsidal and then rectangular dining rooms.

Élites in the local community would dine in these structures, while the 'commoners' feasted in the open air. This is exactly the situation we know from many sites in the Aegean in the archaic and classical periods,[155] including the famous *skēnai* in the Samian Heraion.[156] But this habit may be traced back as early as the LG period. In the second half of the eighth century at Isthmia, 'a small, probably temporary, structure (possibly a tent) using wooden posts' adjoined the LG sacrificial and dining area on the East Terrace I.[157] Catherine Morgan points out that in the course of the eighth century there was 'a trend towards ever greater investment in fine decorated pottery for use in ritual activity'. More elaborate drinking vessels grow sharply in number, in contrast to more traditional types of monochrome cups. All this, she argues, 'may reflect greater display by wealthier participants'.[158] I presume that they are the ones who would dine and drink in the secluded temporary structure at Isthmia, separated from the masses of their community members, just as other Greek élites in

[155] See Tomlinson (1990) esp. 100, on the Perachora sanctuary. Several dining-halls in the sanctuary of Demeter and Kore at Corinth appear simultaneously at the end of the sixth century (see Bookidis 1990, esp. 87–89). In the late fifth and early fourth century they were numerous enough to house 200–240 people, so they no longer served just the élite of the worshippers. In general, for the organization of public ritual feasting (mostly based on the Hellenistic epigraphic evidence), see Schmitt Pantel (2011) 291–358 and in particular pp. 307–308. Given the scarcity of room inside the *hestiatoria* under scrutiny, P. Schmitt Pantel claims that they served priests, local authorities, and special guests, whereas the rest of the local community would dine in the open air.

[156] See Polyaen. VI 45. For the archaeological evidence for such constructions, see Kron (1988) 142–144, with analogies from other sites adduced (ibid., 143–143). Interestingly, numerous olive-lamps were discovered there (Kron 1988, 144), pointing, I think, to the habit of nocturnal banqueting in the sanctuary (for the votives suggesting the existence of regular symposia on Samos in the eighth century, see below, pp. 291–292 with n. 126). Since the classical period, when solid *hestiatoria* were built in many sanctuaries in the Greek world, massive (or very numerous) tents might have served large numbers of worshippers, if not all of them, as in Eur. *Ion* 1128–1170 (see Schmitt Pantel 2011, 209–221, 312–313, as well as ibid., pp. 308–309, on the Athenian Pompeion; cf. *Kerameikos X*, p. 20–22, 126–129).

[157] Gebhard and Hemans (1992) 13–15 (quotation on p. 15) and ibid., pp. 18–20 (written by C. Morgan). In general, cf. Lemos (2002) 222 on ritual dining in many sanctuaries in the Aegean by the Protogeometric period. For the tent (or hut?) at Isthmia, see also Mazarakis Ainian (1997*a*) 97. Cf. also Gebhard (1987) 175.

[158] In Gebhard and Hemans (1992) 20.

later periods. At Isthmia as in Iria, drinking in a sophisticated manner and devoting themselves to demanding cultural pastimes, they would ostentatiously distinguish themselves and thereby confirm their superiority over the 'commoners' of their respective communities.

Already in the second half of the eighth century, Greek élites would dine and drink in sanctuaries, which must have provided perfect spots or 'neutral grounds' for strongly competitive banquets featuring heavy drinking. This solemnly religious setting might have also become an efficient sedative for drunken excess and hubristic behavior, channeling the unavoidable tensions between members of the local 'convivial élites'. Incidentally, one would expect feasting in sanctuaries to be characterized by a relatively high level of shared contributions by the diners, to be the true *symbolai,* also called 'dinners from the baskets'.[159] Other potential forums for the LG symposia look even more interesting.

* * *

My next example is of a different nature. This time I will try to take a closer look at settlement material. Theoretically, the most promising site of this kind might be Zagora on the island of Andros, abandoned around 700 BC. In its last phase (*c.*725–700 BC) Zagora differed markedly from other settlements of the Geometric period with a more compact and regular architecture. Instead of free-standing and one-room structures, there we find some relatively elaborate residential complexes. The best candidate for a regular dining-room in a private context might be Unit H41, equipped with a permanent hearth, with Unit H40 adjacent, a sort of vestibule where some potsherds of convivial and domestic pottery were found. This complex also includes Units H24, H25, and H32, most probably used for storage (and perhaps for habitation), as well as Unit H33, maybe a courtyard for the whole complex. This being the case, the excavators recognized 'living rooms' in Unit H41 and the adjoining H40—both built rather quickly at the beginning of the LG II phase.[160] However, ceramic material from this complex is very scanty, as the site was

[159] See above, pp. 67–68 with n. 172.

[160] *Zagora* II.1, pp. 112–116.

[161] Another compound, including 'Unit H19' (see *Zagora* II.1, pp. 79–88), perhaps with an upper storey (in the MG II period, it was a free-standing building, partly demolished in LG I to accommodate some neighbouring units), could have been the dwelling of the ruler of Zagora. As such, it might have been used as a dining-hall, too (Mazarakis Ainian 1997*a*, 171–176). For hypothetical precursors of the archaic *andrones* in Zagora, see now Langdon (2008) 266 (this important book was published too late to be systematically taken into account in my study). Morris (1998) 28–29,

evacuated in a systematic way. Hence, it would not be safe to conclude that we actually face a sympotic room here.[161]

Much more promising is a very peculiar class of buildings in the LG Euboean world. I already mentioned one of them when analysing the cultural context of the Pithekoussan 'Cup of Nestor'. A large apsidal Structure I in the 'metalworking quarter' on the Mezzavia hill (the Mazzola lot) was destroyed in an earthquake around 700 BC and a rectangular Structure II was built on the spot.[162] I have already focused briefly on a *krater* fragment excavated beneath the foundations of the latter building (see above, pp. 137–138). Numerous potsherds of convivial vessels were found on the floor of the older Structure I, including a *krater* reconstructed in its entirety, but also cooking wares, including a well-preserved 'rough cooking-pot'. There was a spacious bench running along the rear wall in the apse. Adjacent to this building were Structure III, a blacksmith's workshop, and Structure IV (originally dating from LG I, then reshaped), surely a metalworking construction.[163]

One finds a very similar situation in Oropos, most probably inhabited in the Geometric period by the Euboeans from across the straights of Euripos.[164] An 'industrial quarter' was found here as well, with several structures, rebuilt many times, housing metalworking and other industrial activities. There was also a rhomboid area encircled by a massive *peribolos* (in the LG period it was rather irregular), which at some point was given a fairly monumental entrance from the west. Inside stood some small 'industrial' structures, and more importantly, the ovoid domestic Building Iota (later Iota–Alpha), which provided the excavators with very well preserved fragments of drinking vases (cups, *skyphoi*, and *kraters*) from the late eighth century. But the most important structure within the *peribolos* was a large apsidal (an oval in the first and third phase of its development) Building Theta (see Figures 3.4 and 3.5).

It was the most conspicuous construction in this neighbourhood (*c.*5 by 12m) and yielded no traces of metalworking or any other industrial

also takes the architectural changes in the last phase of the existence of Zagora as a sign of a similar process of specialization.

[162] See Buchner (1970/1971) esp. 64–66 (with figs. 4, 5, 6). Cf. Ridgway (1992) 91–96 and Mazarakis Ainian (1997*a*) 105–106.

[163] Buchner (1970/1971) 66; Ridgway (1992) 91–95 and 99–100.

[164] My discussion of the unpublished Oropos material rests in particular upon Mazarakis Ainian (2002) esp. 158–161 (with figs. 6 and 7a, 7b); Mararakis Ainian (1998*a*) and (2006/2007) esp. 85–92 (with fig. 5–7); cf. (on Building Theta) Mazarakis Ainian (1996) 74–79; (1997*b*) 70–71; (1998*a*); (1998*b*) 70–72.

activity. It was erected at the end of the eighth century—as if replacing the older Building Iota, progressively falling into disuse—and was used well into the seventh century. Inside, it had two, and in its apsidal phase three, rooms divided by high stone thresholds. A spacious bench was built inside the apse. Numerous fragments of drinking vessels, including decorated *kraters*, were found, but also potsherds of *lekythoi*, little jugs, and of many coarse hand-made cooking wares. There was one particularly spectacular find in the central room of the building: several terracotta lamps, counted among the earliest thus far discovered in the EIA Aegean. The picture was completed by two bronze pins and a bronze bell-pendant, alongside numerous lead weights for fishing nets. It is important to note that many burial sites, mostly belonging to children, were found within the enclosure and in its close vicinity. The excavator, A. Mazarakis Ainian, without utterly excluding the idea of 'a religious structure or an assembly hall', opted for 'the headquarters of the powerful person who supervised the work in the industrial quarter' (Mazarakis Ainian 2002, 161). This was the period when industrial activities, and in particular metalworking craftsmanship, had clear prestigious connotations that went far beyond their purely economic value.[165] In view of later cultic developments within the enclosure, Mazarakis Ainian postulated the existence of some cult activities venerating the nymph Halia/Leukothea and perhaps her brothers Telchines, spirits of metalworking. I will admit that I am not persuaded by this identification. I am more sympathetic to Jan Paul Crielaard's idea of a specialized burial and cultic area for stillborns and infants of families from this area,[166] thus—I would be tempted to add—functionally appropriating this family compound for wider communal use.

[165] Mazarakis Ainian (2006/2007) 90–91; cf. Doonan and Mazarakis Ainian (2007). In general, cf. also Mazarakis Ainian (2006) 199–206.

[166] Crielaard (2007) 180–181. A mysterious stone disc, of unknown function (for the, slightly less obscure, funerary discs of the archaic period, see Kurtz & Boardman 1977, 188), excavated in the Building Iota–Alpha that bears the no less enigmatic inscription (in genitive) ΠΕΙΘΑΛΙΜΟ may be of some help here. I would take this word (featuring the archaic suffix *-imos* and the element *Peith-* evoking powers of persuasion) not as a human name (contrast the regular compounds in the Homeric telling names such as *Peis-andros*, *Peis-enor*, or *Peisi-stratos*), but as the name of the hero venerated there. An old hero (cf. the obscure name of the Athenian hero *Akademos*), and not an eminent member of the local community heroized upon his death (*pace* Mazarakis Ainian 2002, 161–163 and Mazarakis Ainian 2006/2007, 91–92). One may speculate that the heroic cult observed in this compound could have attracted the unusually high number of sub-adult burials within the enclosure and in its vicinity.



Figure 3.4 Oropos, *peribolos* in the 'industrial quarter' with Buildings Iota/Iota–Alpha and Theta (after Mazarakis Ainian 2006/2007, fig. 4). A helicopter photo by K. Mazarakis Ainian. Courtesy of A. Mazarakis Ainian

I would go a bit further along these lines and suggest that Building Theta, erected within the same *peribolos*, may not have been just a domestic structure, but a specialized dining-hall appropriated by a wider local aristocratic élite. After all, the succession of two elaborate buildings (the Iota/Iota–Alpha and the Theta) devoid of traces of any industrial activity, standing out in their immediate neighbourhood as

[167] I am aware of Mazarakis Ainian's observation that such enclosures often surrounded aristocratic *oikoi* in Eretria and in Oropos (briefly Mazarakis Ainian 2006, 195). My point is that this particular *peribolos* is far more solid and more regular in shape than others. I would assume that this 'public' or communal facility evolved from an earlier

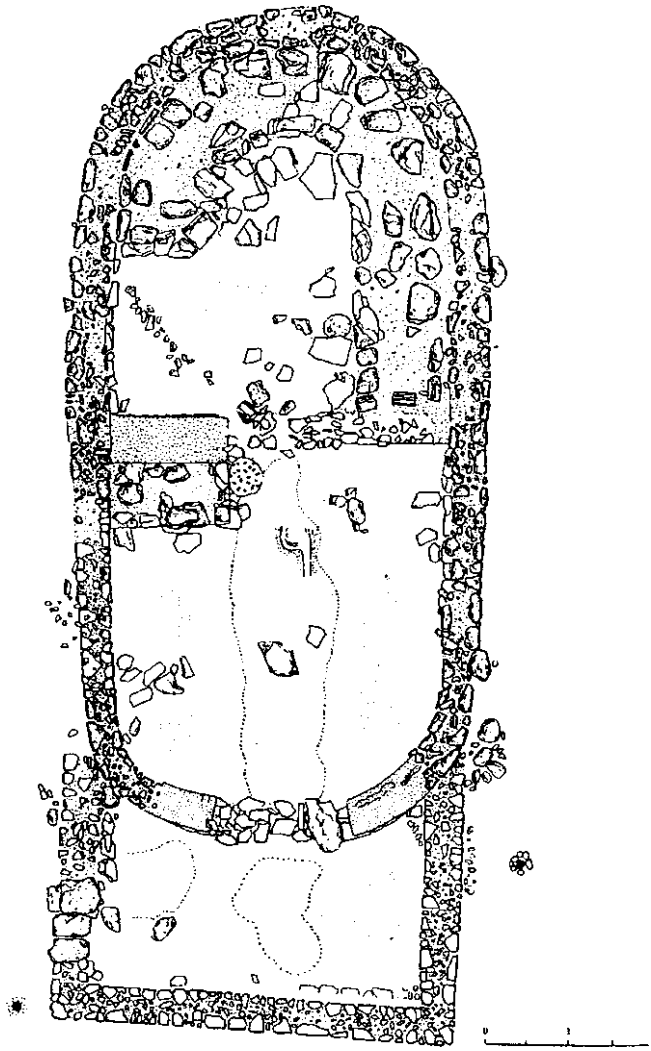


Figure 3.5 Oropos, Building Theta (after Mazarakis Ainian 2002, fig. 6). Drawing by N. Kalliontzis. Courtesy of A. Mazarakis Ainian and the Greek Archaeological Society

aristocratic dwelling (see below), but there is a clear difference, a development later on crowned by some form of heroic cult in the seventh century—introduced, which seems important, without putting an end to the élite dining in the Building Theta.

distinguished by a monumental *peribolos* with an impressive entrance,[167] would not provide a perfect living space in the bothersome vicinity of the densely packed industrial structures generating fire, smoke, and much noise. And the same could be said of the Pithekoussan Structure II (and its predecessor Structure I) in the Mazzola industrial quarter—deliberately situated at some distance from the settlement. In this context, we should underline the possible implications of fine convivial pottery, including high-quality *kraters* and spacious benches in the apses of Building Theta and Structure I.[168] In which case, it may not be irrelevant that, according to the excavators, the remnants of the neighbouring Building Iota–Alpha began housing some form of heroic cult in the seventh century, when Building Theta was still in use.

The abundant presence of traces of decomposed fishing nets in the central chamber of Building Theta, combined with the conceivably uncomfortable side effects of the local industrial activities, may invite a daring hypothesis. In the daytime, the building and its close environs might have been used for various purposes, including the repairing of fishing nets, whereas its main function as an élite dining-hall would only come to the fore after dark, when industrial work stopped. I think this idea may be borne out by the unusual assemblage of terracotta lamps in the main room.[169] Incidentally, the habit of regular nocturnal feasting, one of the crucial characteristics of the symposion, was well-known to the poet of the *Odyssey* and his contemporary public.[170]

If we accept this interpretation, it may be worthwhile to briefly consider the conceivable socio-political implications of the situation. Functionally, a specialized building in an outlying or an exclusively industrial quarter is not very different from permanent or temporary *hestiatoria* in a sacred precinct. In both cases, the noisy and potentially quarrelsome drinking parties would be held at a comfortable distance from family dwellings, and possible tensions between the

[168] Incidentally, the shape and size of the apse of the Building Theta make it impossible for the bench there to comfortably accommodate a reclining banquet of more than two people (w. *c.*1m; h. 0.5m; overall length of less than 5m). (See Figures 3.4 and 3.5.) I am grateful to Professor Mazarakis Ainian for discussing with me some aspects of this building.

[169] The excavator, A. Mazarakis Ainian, mentioned to me that he had also pondered this interpretation of the lamps.

[170] For the nocturnal feasting in Homer, see below, pp. 215–216.

fellow-diners would be moderated by the middle-ground status of the place in which they meet. The carefully erected structures, and, in the case of Oropos, the monumental enclosure, would add to the prestige of the dining group within its local community. In a word, I would be tempted to interpret at least the Oropos Building Theta as a 'communal house', a *dēmios oikos* designed for élite feasting as hinted at in the passage of the *Odyssey* I cited above. The cultic (heroic in the event) function of the Oropos enclosure would have facilitated this development.

However, before we proceed we should assess a possible implication of the Oropos enclosure. As already mentioned, one striking feature of this compound is the unusually high number of sub-adult burials within it and its proximity.[171] Tombs or burial grounds were possibly additional forums for organizing drinking parties later in the archaic period. But one could already cite cases from the LG period,[172] to mention only 'Building A' in the so-called 'Tholos Cemetery' in the Athenian Agora.[173] One important characteristic of this site would prohibit interpreting its conspicuous 'Building A', most probably used as a dining-hall, as another *dēmios oikos* analogous to the Oropos Building Theta. The relatively compact enclosure of the Tholos plot must have been the seat of a powerful Athenian clan and (based on bones and skeleton analyses) the incumbents of its cemetery belonged to two consecutive generations of the same family. If symposia proper were held in connection with the graves there, the nature of the venues would be different from those in Oropos, where the infant graves surely represent a rather wide spectrum of the local (élite?) population. In other documented cases of Geometric dining facilities related to graves or built in burial grounds the same

[171] As observed by Crielaard (2007) 180–181, the number of those burials in this area equals the total number of Geometric and Subgeometric infant pot burials reported for Eretria as a whole. Some sort of specialization at the Oropos site is beyond doubt.

[172] Cf. e.g. Hägg (1983*b*); see also below.

[173] For this site, see esp. van der Eijnde (forthcoming) 106–110 (with further bibliography).

[174] A very useful review of the material from Attica can be found in van der Eijnde (forthcoming) as regards not only the aforementioned 'Tholos Cemetery', but also other buildings 'built in relative isolation near substantial cemeteries' (ibid., 261) in Thorikos, Academy, Anavyssos, and on the north slope of the Areopagus (cf. the so-called 'Oval Building'). As Floris van der Eijnde puts it (ibid.), 'It is likely that in all these cases groups of kinsmen gathered in close proximity to their deceased ancestors to assert their identity as a group through commensality'.

qualification may apply as in the case of the 'Tholos Cemetery'.[174] My next example will provide a far safer analogy for the Oropos enclosure.

A large oval building from the LG period ('Building A'; 4.90 by 9m) has been excavated in Viglatouri on Euboea.[175] Both inside and just outside the remnants of the building, in the adjoining square area at its northern end, numerous fragments of *kraters*, jugs, *skyphoi*, and two amphora bases were found. A solid transverse wall divided 'Building A' into two parts and there was also a spacious bench in the northern apse. The bench and its close vicinity yielded 'a large number of bones of both large and small animals . . . , possibly indicating that sacrifices were held outside and banquets or certain other rituals inside the building' (Sapouna-Sakellaraki 1998, 64). Most importantly, a huge number of cups, *skyphoi*, and fragments of as many as ten different *kraters* were excavated in the area. For my present purpose, it is important that this structure was built on several MG cist graves, devoid of skeletal remains, but with some grave goods including fragments of MG *kraters* and *skyphoi*. The adjacent paved 'square' (4.6 by 3m) to the north was also build on earlier graves, this time Protogeometric. Further to the north, there was a circular stone structure (still unexcavated by the time of the publication of the preliminary report) that resembled structures connected with ritual funerary banquets, known from Asine, Mycenae, Miletus, and Troy.[176] The whole complex was encircled by a stone enclosure, suggesting a specialized sacred precinct clearly marked out from the surrounding Geometric settlement. More specifically, the excavator E. Sapouna-Sakellaraki thought that 'Building A' 'was not an ordinary residence, but . . . it was built above graves (cenotaphs) and was a *herōon*—a sanctuary in honour of dead men who had been heroised'. 'The "square" may possibly be an area for larger gatherings of people', while some secret rites may have taken place in the building.[177]

I think we could identify the oval building with yet another type of *dēmios oikos*, perhaps specialized for some form of heroic cult, as might have been the case for the aforementioned enclosure in Oropos. What is of crucial importance is the fact that 'Building A' in

[175] See in general Sapouna-Sakellaraki (1998).

[176] See Hägg (1983*b*) esp. 190–193. In Nichoria, a similar structure was unearthed inside the large building IV–1 (ibid., 192).

[177] Quotations from Sapouna-Sakellaraki (1998) 68 and 69, respectively.

Viglatouri was built above earlier empty graves (and not close to a burial plot in continuous use) and on the spot of a Mycenaean megaron and a Protogeometric apsidal building. This—just like the unusual concentration of sub-adult burials and the consecutive heroic cult (of Peithalimos?) in Oropos—seems to point toward the wider communal function of this compound, and not to a restricted family cult as was the case of the Tholos plot in the Athenian Agora.

But the nature of the cult in Viglatouri and Oropos should not cause us to forget that the local ritual featured, in the first place, drinking parties of rather exiguous groups of diners. Now, alongside the peculiar assemblage of convivial pottery that includes fine *kraters*,[178] the Viglatouri structure also shares several striking architectural features with Building Theta in Oropos and with Structure I in Pithekoussai. These not only include their monumental sizes and careful masonry, the spacious benches in their apses, but also their well-articulated internal division into two or three rooms, which is outstanding in their immediate historical context. This feature may perhaps indicate more ambitious spatial organization, a move toward specialization and indeed 'formalization' of space in the buildings playing an exceptional function in the life of the local community and particularly the local 'convivial élites'.[179]

* * *

My last example comes from the so-called 'aristocratic quarter' in Eretria (See Figure 3.6).[180] Before the first, still apsidal, *hekatompedon*-temple of Apollo (Ed2 on Figure 3.6, phase II), a very solid and sophisticated structure (*in antis*?) once identified with the *Daphnephoreion* (Ed1 on Figure 3.6, phase I) stood there, with other, much

[178] Before the final publication of the site, it is difficult to say what should one make of 'Building E' in Viglatouri, with its own square paved structure and another semi-circular stone structure adjacent, where several *krater* bodies and as many as about fifteen legs of high-footed Geometric *kraters* were found. Cf. Sapouna-Sakellaraki (1998) 72.

[179] I owe this point to J. P. Crielaard.

[180] In general, see already Mazarakis Ainian (1987) 20–21. Cf. Mazarakis Ainian (1997*a*) 58–63; (2002) 161 with n. 44; (2006) 195–200 (esp. 195); Crielaard (2007) 185, with fig. 8. A thorough reinterpretation of the history of this area will be found in Verdan (2013) Chaps. 7 and 8.

[181] For similar enclosures in this area before the erection of the *hekatompedon*, and elsewhere in Eretria, see Mazarakis Ainian (2006) 199.

[182] This was the hypothesis put forward by Bérard (1971) and Auberson (1974) (Bérard 1988, 149–152, hesitantly withdrew from this interpretation). As Mazarakis Ainian (1997*a*) 58–63, rightly observed, there is no trace of votive activity in the area that was still used for élite burials.

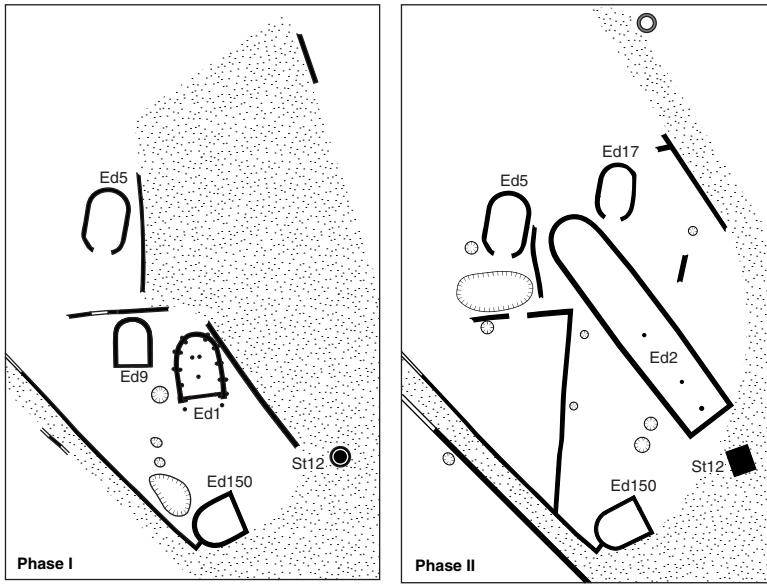


Figure 3.6 Eretria, plan of Geometric phases of the sanctuary of Apollo Daphnephoros: Phase I (MG II–LG I); Phase II (LG I–LG II). Drawing by Th. Theurillat. Courtesy of the Swiss School of Archaeology in Greece

more modest constructions adjacent. The whole area was encircled by a stone enclosure.[181] It is no longer possible to interpret Building A as a 'pre-temple' of Apollo.[182] Built in the mid eighth century, the structure, in which one can perhaps postulate feasting activity to have taken place in the LG period, disappeared when the apsidal *hekatompedon* was built.[183]

The two buildings seem to have been somehow interrelated functionally. A. Mazarakis Ainian, in accordance with his general theory tracing the development of archaic Greek temples back to EIA rulers' dwellings, interpreted the so-called *Daphnephoreion* as 'the dwelling of an important individual with religious prerogatives' (Mazarakis Ainian 2006, 195) and posited that the neighbouring 'open air cult place . . . developed into the sanctuary of the poliad divinity of the Eretrians' (ibid.) by the end of the eighth century. I endorse Mazarakis Ainian's theory with one important addition. The crucial point is that,

[183] I owe this point to a recent reassessment of the material by Verdan (2013).

unlike the so-called *Daphnephoreion*, the temple was oriented in line with, and opening into, a pre-existing open air hearth or altar (St12 on Figure 3.6, phases I and II). I think that in this particular case we should emphasize the fact that the *Daphnephoreion* (i.e. the ruler's dwelling) was not simply replaced, or taken over, by the first *hekatompedon* (the temple), but the former seem to have served a different purpose, perhaps specializing in housing élite feasts. Simultaneously, we may assume that the communal cult and cultic feasts were held around the open air altar (St12). Therefore, I would be tempted to elaborate on Mazarakis's theory by positing two parallel developments 'from rulers' dwellings'—one 'to temples' and another one to communal dining-halls for the members of local élites.[184] This double specialization may have resulted in the situation we witnessed in Iria on Naxos, at Isthmia, and in the Samian Heraion, where local élites dined in separate, permanent or temporary, structures while the masses of worshippers held their ritual feasts in the open air. Let me add that the Oropos Building Theta is a good case in point. It may have assumed the functions of the earlier Building Iota, perhaps the house of the local leader, to become a *dēmios oikos* by serving as a dining-hall for the highest aristocracy of Oropos.

A striking confirmation of this contention comes from a spectacular recent discovery several metres to the south of the *Daphnephoreion* in Eretria. There, the Swiss Archaeological School excavated another apsidal construction, so-called Building 150 (Ed150 on Figure 3.6, phases I and II).[185] It was slightly smaller than the *Daphnephoreion* and erected some time later, but probably still close to the mid eighth century, so it coexisted with the Ed2 in LG period, probably *c.*725–700 BC. Unlike all other buildings in this area, it does not open to the south, but was oriented towards the open air hearth or altar, and therefore its deliberate link with the sacrificial cult cannot be doubted. This structure was not big enough (*c.*7.5m by 7.3m) to house more than just a small fraction of the community dining in connection with and around the altar, in front of the future temple of Apollo. I would interpret this construction as yet another

[184] Mazarakis Ainian (2006) 206, also takes into account the possibility that the aforementioned structures from Eretria, Oropos, and Pithakousai might have been 'dwellings or buildings reserved for feasting'.

[185] Ducrey, Schmid, Verdan, and Simon (2001) 86–87 (the section written by S. Verdan), with fig. 3 and pl. 28,1.

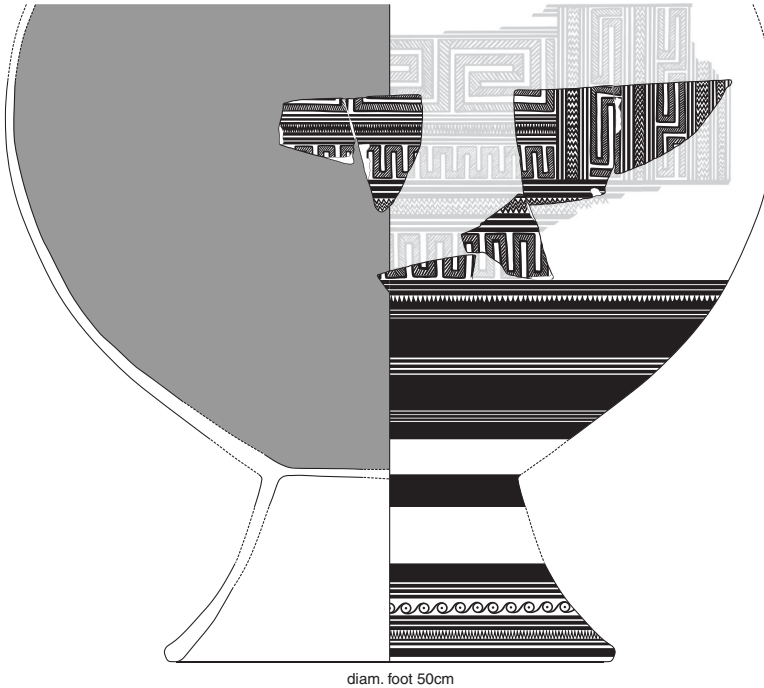


Figure 3.7 Eretria, MG II Attic *krater* from Building 150 (Ed150), partially restored. Drawing by S. Verdan. Courtesy of the Swiss School of Archaeology in Greece

élite dining-hall, built for that purpose when the pre-existing *Daphnephoreion* proved insufficient for the needs of the local 'convivial élite', probably to allow for ritual dining of a larger number of aristocrats or some competing group thereof. As such, the erection of this building might have marked a change in the nature and function of this formerly 'private' enclosure into a communal sanctuary, even before the construction of the first *hekatompedon* of Apollo at some point in the second half of the eighth century.

But there is something more to be said about Building 150 of Eretria. There is a rectangular clay platform (*c.*0.75m; h. 0.1m) at the far end of the apse serving as the base of a large Attic *krater* (at

[186] Ducrey, Schmid, Verdan, and Simon (2001) 86, with pl. 28,2. Cf. also Mazarakis Ainian (2006) 195 and 199. For another (Euboean) *krater* excavated in this building, see Verdan (2006) esp. 104–106, with Pl. 20,1–2.

least 0.5m in diameter), whose lower part was preserved *in situ*.[186] (See Figure 3.7.) Interestingly, the exact position of the vessel within the chamber corresponds very well to the 'topography' of the *megaron* in the house of Odysseus, where among the suitors one finds 'Leiodes . . . , who always sat at the back of the room beside the fine krater' (*Od.* XXI 145–146). It is hardly conceivable that we could find a more telling testimony to the Geometric symposia than this Eretrian building still in use in the time of the 'Cup of Nestor'.

3.4 CONCLUSIONS: THE NATURE OF THE SYMPOSION IN THE LATE EIGHTH AND EARLY SEVENTH CENTURY BC

3.4.1 The Symposion at the Beginning of the Archaic Period

In the light of the 'Cup of Nestor' from Pithekoussai, by the mid eighth century BC and at least in the Euboean milieu, we can assume the existence of a luxurious banquet whose participants devoted themselves to wine consumption and sophisticated table talk focused *inter alia* on the 'works of Aphrodite'. The table talk could be organized according to the series of the symposiasts' competitive poetic performances. In a word, the culture-oriented wine feast of the Greek élites is already attested to in this period.

This being the case, with regard to our preliminary characterization of the symposion based on later archaic sources, we are left with two important questions. First, were the eighth-century Euboean symposia nocturnal feasts? Secondly, were they egalitarian banquets? As to our first question, the testimony of the 'Cup of Nestor' is of course inconclusive, but the lamps found in the (convivial) Building Theta in Oropos make such an hypothesis plausible. In any case, we must wait for our earliest literary sources, namely the Homeric poetry studied in the next chapter, to offer some evidence to this effect. Meanwhile, the egalitarian character of the early Euboean banquets may be postulated based on the Pithekoussan epigram which I take to testify to the procedure of wine circulation. Here as well, we need some external data to substantiate my contention, and once again this is to be found in Homer, as we will see in Chapter 4.

For all the above reasons, I provisionally identify the Euboean élite banquets of the eighth century BC with the symposion proper. In this chapter, I also pointed out the possibility that eighth-century élites had more or less specialized buildings to host their symposia: permanent or temporary *hestiatoria* in some extra-urban sanctuaries (Iria, Isthmia, the Samian Heraion), non-religious buildings sometimes placed in outlying settlement areas (the 'industrial quarters' in Pithekoussai and Oropos), and specialized houses in some dwelling quarters (Eretria).

In my *pars destruens* of this chapter, I argued against the identification of the Greek symposion with the reclining banquet, insisting on the coexistence of reclined and seated élite feasting in the Aegean throughout the seventh century BC. In connection with this, based on a reassessment of the pertinent Oriental material, I opposed the idea of the Near Eastern provenance of the symposion. I do not exclude multifarious Levantine influences on the symposion, but only assume that they were indirect, did not affect the very core of this institution, and had a protracted adoption. In short, such potential influences do not elucidate the origins of the Greek aristocratic banquet (see also below, 3.5).

Taking into account, on the one hand, my negative conclusions as to the Oriental origins of the symposion and, on the other hand, its already highly sophisticated character in the mid eighth century BC, it seems natural to postulate a rather long prior development behind this custom. This being the case, it is imperative to continue our quest for its origins—this time in Aegean Greece.

3.5 APPENDIX III: THE RECLINING BANQUET AND THE ORIENTALIZATION OF THE SYMPOSION

In a paper comparing the symposion with Near Eastern forms of banqueting, Walter Burkert pointed out that, when discussing the Greek custom of reclining at a feast, scholars usually ignore traditional Greek *stibades* (beds of straw, leaves, etc.).[187] Burkert argued that 'we should consider seriously the possibility that dining on

[187] See esp. Ar. *Pax*, 347–349 and Xen. *HG* VII 1, 16; cf. Theoc. *Id.* VII, 63–70. On *stibades* cf. Verpoorten (1962) (*sibades* in Sparta: ibid., pp. 151–154 and in the cult of Dionysus: pp. 157–160).

couches was introduced not in connection with the symposium proper but with the ritual feast at the sanctuary, with *stibades* supplying the temple space' (Burkert 1991, 18). Sacrificial feasts with *stibades* might have been held in the Aegean long before the rise of the symposion. At sacrifices organized outdoors, 'at sacred places more or less distant from settlements', people 'would naturally lie down on *stibades*' even in the 'Dark Centuries' (ibid.).[188] This traditional mode of feasting would coexist with the seated banquet for a long time.

If so, how should we account for the fact that beginning in the last quarter of the seventh century—in the Aegean and slightly later in non-Greek Italy—the reclining banquet gathered momentum and ultimately held sway in élite feasting habits, particularly in the Greek symposion?

John Curtis Franklin has recently revived the theory of the 'Lydian connection' of Greek orientalizing culture. He argues that 'from the late eighth century, and perhaps earlier, the Assyrian emperors actively cultivated a cosmopolitan but Mezopotiamianizing musical movement in their own palaces' (Franklin 2008, 196), most probably encouraging their vassals and neighbours to do the same, the Lydian kings among them. Some Assyrian musical instruments, especially harps, seem to have been popular in Lydia in the seventh century. Later on, they invaded the Greek symposion in the form of *magadis*, for instance.[189] Another Lydian-inspired instrument was *barbitos* (or *barmos*), credited to the semi-legendary Terpander, to be used by aristocratic laymen as opposed to professional musicians enjoying the *kithara*. Thus, dim echoes of high Mesopotamian musical culture would reach the Aegean from the Lydian court under the Mermnad dynasty.

I think that the close coincidence of this phenomenon in time with the ultimate spread of the reclining banquet in the Aegean is meaningful. Besides the already examined iconographical and poetic material, as Helmut Kyrieleis established long ago, this was also the time when Greek furniture (bed, biers, and couches) underwent momentous development. Henceforth, they ostentatiously imitate their luxurious Oriental prototypes (Kyrieleis 1969, 98–204, esp. 116–123, 203). If we

[188] Burkert (1991) 18. Somewhat similarly, Tomlinson (1990) esp. 100, on Greek *hestiatoria* of the archaic period. Cf. also Burkert (1985) 10, 212–213 (on *stibades* in the *theoxenia* and in the cult of Dioscuri) and Burkert (1979) 44–45 (*stibades* in an etological perspective—as much older than Bronze Age *thronoi*).

[189] Cf. e.g. Alkman, fr. 101 Page and Anacreon, fr. 29, l. 1 Page [PMG 374]. For the orientalization of Greek culture in the archaic period, see in general Burkert (1992) [1984]. Cf. also Morris (1992); West (1997); and Rollinger (2001).

were to use the term in its strongest possible sense, it was then, I would argue, that the Greek banquet was ultimately 'orientalized' in a number of ways *à la lydienne*, opening a path to the orientalization of the Italiot feasting habits under the influence of the Greeks.

4

Homer, the 'Heroic Feast', and the Symposion

4.1 INTRODUCTION: HOW TO READ THE 'HOMERIC FEAST'?

4.1.1 Introductory Remarks

At first sight, nothing is further removed from the symposion than the manner in which heroes dine and drink in the *Iliad* and in the *Odyssey*. Reflecting on these discrepancies was a non-negligible part of Homeric scholarship in antiquity.[1] Yet nowadays scholars tend to interpret the banquets in Homer as a more or less coherent historical picture to be used in our reconstruction of the origins of the symposion. Usually, they take them as representing earlier Greek convivial habits from which the symposion is believed to have evolved.[2] In this chapter, I will confine myself to a more sceptical attitude as to the

[1] As witnessed by Athenaeus's introductory sections in his *Learned Banqueters* (esp. I 8 e–18 f), partly excerpted from a mysterious Hellenistic *Life of the Homeric Heroes* (*Περὶ τοῦ τῶν ἡρώων καθ' Ὅμηρον βίου*), a subtitle given to the sections following Athen. I 8 e by the epitomators responsible for the manuscript tradition represented by the manuscripts C (Parisinus suppl. gr. 841) and E (Laurentianus LX.2) of Athenaeus. Cf. *FGrHist* 594 F 8, with Jacoby's comm. *ad loc.* (referring to earlier scholarship on the issue). *Suda*, *s.v.* *Ὅμηρος* (O 251 Adler) gives what looks as a simplified title of this work and ascribes it to Dioskorides. The treatise was once attributed to Zenodotos, but see Pfeiffer (1971) 112–113.

[2] See esp. Murray (1983*a*), (1983*b*), (1983*c*), (1993) [1978], esp. 54 and 81 as well as Murray (1995) [1993], 221–224; Van Wees (1995); Rundin (1996). Vetta (1983*b*) and especially Colesanti (1999), who think that the symposion as such is abundantly present in Homer, in particular in the *Odyssey*, follow the same paradigm when arguing that the 'Homeric symposion' was an early form from which the classical symposion must have evolved.

feasibility of a general historical analysis of Homer, an approach that I will briefly try to justify.

At least for the time being, I can happily dispense with the time-honoured Homeric Question. Suffice it to say that no serious scholar would nowadays put the date of the composition of the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey* (or their 'ultimate fixed form', or whatever one chooses to call the act or process responsible for their current state) before the mid eighth century BC.[3] This being the case, it is highly unlikely that the poet(s) of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* did not have first-hand experience of the symposion, as spectacularly attested in the last quarter of the eighth century by the epigram of the previously discussed 'Cup of Nestor'.[4] In what follows, I would like to conventionally use the terms such as 'poet', 'author', or even the name 'Homer', as a shorthand for the poets(s) to whom we owe both grand epics, in their (more or less) present form. For the time being, I am only concerned with the picture we get from these epics and with various types of data underlying this picture. In the last sections of this chapter, however, I will have to return to the question of the authorship of the poems in order to touch upon the issue of the attitudes of the poet or poets toward the symposion, as reflected by its 'manipulations' with particular reference to the *Odyssey*.

Now, the poet(s) might have simply accommodated traditional epic images and values regarding feasting. These images and values might have been formed earlier in the process of the historical development of the Greek epic, and they might have more or less faithfully reflected some historical stage of the development of Greek conviviality. But they likewise might have belonged to the poetic creation of an ideal world of the heroes of old. Therefore, I shall not try to reconstruct the 'heroic banquet' (historical or not). Instead, I will first reassess some discrepancies between the poetic picture of the 'heroic banquet' and the symposion, as well as consider the more general implications of this incompatibility. Next, I will try to look for the traces of an awareness of the symposion proper on the part of the poet(s) and the implied audience.[5] Finally, I will try to resolve the question of the poet(s)'s attitude to the symposion and thereby reflect on the early history of the symposion.

[3] For a useful overview of this debate see recently Van Wees (1999) 2–13.

[4] By first-hand experience, I mean both the familiarity with the institution of the symposion and the awareness of its system of values.

[5] See Wecowski (2002*b*).

4.1.2 'Poetic Registers' of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*

Let me start with a truism. I am deeply convinced that a historical analysis of the Homeric epics may only prove successful under the condition that we read them as (more or less) consistent literary works of art. Otherwise, relying on various theoretical approaches, scholars either tend to isolate separate pieces of information believed to be attributable to different stages of the hypothetical evolution of the *Iliad* and of the *Odyssey*,[6] or they advocate a more or less literal interpretations of the epics, combining diverse pieces of information drawn from both poems into a uniform and homogeneous picture of the 'Homeric world'.[7]

I think we ought to begin by isolating different communicative 'registers' of the narratives, i.e. differentiated modes of referentiality the narrator uses to convey a meaningful message, or different sorts of messages (moral, emotional, explanatory in factual terms, etc.), to his audience.[8] Now, concerning the manner in which Homer describes, presents, or alludes to diverse convivial phenomena and situations, I would provisionally distinguish six such communicative 'registers'. They should all be dealt with differently if we are to succeed in our enterprise.

First comes the world of the heroes, i.e. of the main human characters of the plot. It is here, I assume, that the traditional epic conventions are at their height, where the situations, objects, and values of the world known to the poet and to his audience are duly idealized and archaized to produce the overarching effect of the so-called 'epic distance', having recourse to diverse images and formulas drawing from the traditional stock of Homer's oral background. As a result, to return to the main focus of this chapter, we get the picture of

[6] Thus, recently, e.g. Sherratt (1990).

[7] In this section, I epitomize one of my works in progress, presented in some detail in Wecowski (2011*a*) with relevant bibliography. For a rich scholarly debate on this issue see, in particular: Finley (1988) [1954]; Andreev (1984); Morris (2001) [1986]; Crielaard (1995*b*); Raaflaub (1997*a*) and (1998).

[8] In the logic of the narrative, the overall effect of the workings of such diverse registers may at times prove inconsistent, but Homer was not a nineteenth-century historical novelist alert to potential anachronisms when conceiving his vision of the past. Beyond all the potential inconsistencies in his communicative registers, his picture of the world of the heroes was consistent enough for his envisioned public. And all communicative tools and registers contributed beautifully to that goal.

how the great and wealthy heroes of old must have dined, but their mythical ways are of course hardly practicable for Homer's intended public, as ancient critics of Homer understood, for example, with regard to the overwhelming presence of roasted meat in the 'heroic diet'.[9] This is not to say that we will not be able to find some of the realities or values of the poet's contemporary world, but the strength of the epic convention will be such as to prevent us from identifying them before we have studied other communicative registers of the poems.

Secondly, there is the 'divine' or Olympic register of the plot; the happy, inconsequential, joyful, and amazingly luxurious life of the gods is by definition contrasted with that of suffering and miserable human heroes. As some scholars have long seen,[10] it is here that Homer often seems less serious and more light-hearted, rather than when singing about this vale of tears. In this realm, the conventions of traditional epic poetry look less binding on the poet and, paradoxically perhaps, his creativity may be at its height. In some respects, the way the Olympians dine and drink will prove strangely un-heroic and curiously 'modern', as we shall see shortly. To some extent, the mythical world of the fair Phaeacians falls into the same category of the 'non-human' register whose fabulous opulence makes for the possibility of some contemporary elements creeping easily into the plot.[11]

Straightforward normative interventions by the gods into the human world (but also normative utterances by humans guided or inspired by the gods) will form the third register of the narrative. Here, the audience learns important principles to be observed when feasting, although it is not altogether clear whether the divine

[9] In general, see recently M. Heath (2000); cf. also Berdowski (2008).

[10] See e.g. Codino (1960). Cf. Nestle (1905) and Friedländer (1934).

[11] See, famously, the detailed description of the colonial enterprise by Nausithoos (*Od*. VI 8–10) as well as the description of the topography of an idealized *polis* (*Od*. VI 262–269; cf. VII 43–45). In general, cf. Mossé (1980) and Cordano (1976/1977). See also Olson (1995) 184–188, for a characterization of the Phaeacians as 'a true city and a true community'. In his sensitive discussion, this scholar interestingly parallels Scheria and Ithaca in his analysis of the political aspect of the *Odyssey* (Olson 1995, 184–204): there is a contrast but also many important analogies between the 'profoundly unsettled' (and 'somewhat poor and backward', p. 189) Ithaca and the 'more stable' (as well as fantastically rich and sophisticated) Scheria (all other quotes on p. 184). I would add that precisely because Ithaca represents a city in a deep crisis and Scheria is an ideal mythical state enjoying a close relationship with the gods, the poet, to put it grossly, could afford to loose the straightjacket of the heroic convention and use a more contemporary system of signs when dealing with his audience.

precepts pertain to the heroic world only or meet the contemporaneous ideals of the intended audience of the poet as well.

My fourth register, perhaps the most important for my present purpose, combines diverse phenomena that belong to what might be dubbed 'non-traditional referentiality',[12] such as similes or metaphors which are not quite at home in the world of the heroes, but openly refer the audience to their contemporary world to fully grasp the meaning of a given passage.[13]

This is something very different from (rare) involuntarily and banal anachronisms, which, if necessary, might be identified as a fifth 'register' of the narrative, at least as far as Homeric conviviality is concerned.[14]

My sixth register is the specific and very peculiar case of the Suitors of Penelope. The anarchic Ithaca, devoid of her king for twenty long years, is so abnormal that the feasts of the Suitors are in many ways very different from the manner in which Homeric heroes dine and drink elsewhere in the *Iliad* and in the *Odyssey*.[15] True, we ought to assume that these banquets follow an old epic motif of abhorrent, and ultimately deadly, feasts,[16] but Homer provides us with a series of peculiar details that point to a more specific and coherently executed poetic intent when describing the feasts of the Suitors.[17] Decoding this intent will prove crucial for my argument in this chapter.

* * *

These methodological preliminaries may perhaps let us avoid a well-established pitfall of Homeric scholarship with respect to the historical interpretation of Homer's commensality. In his illuminating paper

[12] See Foley (1997) 165–173 and Danek (2002) 3–19.

[13] The well-know metaphor featuring the image of tempering iron (*Od.* IX 391–393), is a good case in point. Cf. Gray (1954) esp. 12. Cf. also Lorimer (1950) 118 and A. Heubeck, *Odyssey II*, *ad* IX 391–4 (p. 34).

[14] In general, cf. Rutherford (2011).

[15] The liar tales of Odysseus in disguise (*Od.* XIII 253–286; XIV 192–359; XVII 419–444; XIX 165–299; XXIV 244–297; 303–314), long recognized by scholars as particularly revealing for our historical analyses of Homer's contemporary background, are in a way analogous to the anarchic and abnormal Ithaca as they usually feature a socially marginal (imaginary) character abruptly changing, for good or ill, his prior social position in non-heroic circumstances. In general, see also A. Hoekstra, *Odyssey II*, p. 179 (*ad* XIII 256–286).

[16] Cf. Thompson (1955–1958) vol. IV: motifs K871.2 ('Slaughter of drunken enemies in banquet hall') and K811.1.1–2 ('Enemies invited to banquet and killed'). Some traces of this motif can perhaps be recognized in the scene of Agamemnon's death in the *Odyssey* (*Od.* XI 419–420).

[17] As already argued by Saïd (1979).

'Princes at Dinner: Social Event and Social Structure in Homer', H. van Wees observes that 'Two fundamentally different interpretations have been advanced, with some scholars arguing that informal, private Homeric feasting serves to create hierarchical relationship between host and guests. While according to others it serves to create ties of friendship and solidarity among equals'.[18] His final conclusion is that 'Only on rare occasions . . . , at weddings and funerals, does the generosity of the host play any real part in advancing his status. At all other times, private hospitality is reciprocal and on a basis of equality . . .' (Van Wees 1995, 177).

Of course, in an actual society both modalities of élite feasting would naturally coexist, alternating from one occasion to another. However, without anticipating my conclusions, let me only mention that, strikingly, the 'rare occasions' alluded to and analysed by Van Wees (and indeed other, less rare, occasions of the kind in Homer) are chiefly found in the 'heroic register' of the Homeric narrative, depicted at length by the poet and latently crucial to the manner in which he conceives of his poetic world. On the other hand, the occasions featuring reciprocal commensal exchanges, especially equal social relationships in a convivial context, are mainly found in other 'registers' of the poems. As we shall see below, a totally different picture of Homeric conviviality emerges depending on whether we focus on the 'heroic register' of the narrative or other 'registers', particularly the sphere of the 'non-traditional referentiality'.

4.2 THE HEROIC BANQUET AND THE SYMPOSION

4.2.1 Heroic Feast: Terminology and General Problems

For any comparison between the 'heroic feast' and the symposion to be valid, we must beforehand discount the banquets held in a public space and involving the community at large, as in the case of the sacrificial

[18] Van Wees (1995) 166, with a lengthy n. 42 (pp. 166–167) illustrating and developing this idea. Cf. also Van Wees (1992) esp. 44–47.

[19] For Homeric feasts see in particular Buchholz (1883) 180–217; Finsler (1906) esp. 313–318; Jeanmaire (1939) 85–96; Bruns (1970) Q45–Q63; Finley (1988) [1954] esp. 123–126; Murray (1993) [1978] 47–48 and Murray (1995) [1993] 221–224; Van Wees (1995); Rundin (1996) 181–205; Sherratt (2004). Cf. Ulf (1990) 192–212.

banquet at the outset of Book III in the *Odyssey*, limiting ourselves to those held indoors, if not privately, in a hero's house or tent.[19]

* * *

There are several usual terms for feasts in the world of the heroes, some of them pertaining (with minor 'deviations') to the time of the day when the banquet is held;[20] others, more relevant here, refer to the character, or function, of the banquet. The words in the former group will generally be used later in Greek antiquity, and already in Homer they look like technical and daily terms with no special significance. However, those of the second group, which have long generated modern scholarly debates, are particularly important in this context: *eilapinē*, *dais* (and in particular *dais eïsē*), and *eranos*.[21] Now, *eranos* appears only marginally in alluding to something that actually does not take place within the frames of the plot,[22] so it forms a case apart that cannot easily be accommodated to the realities of the Homeric banquet. As for the rest of the terms just mentioned, they obviously must have meant something specific to the poet(s), who no doubt deemed them emblematic of heroic feasting. All these terms feature prominently in the world of the Homeric heroes. The same is true of other terms, often taken by modern scholars as alluding to some particular (and historical) convivial customs and social institutions, especially to the famous 'wine of the elders' (γερούσιος οἶνος), which

[20] Such terms include *ariston*, *deipnon*, *dorpon*, and perhaps also *deieliēsas* (*Od.* XVII 599, with comm. *ad loc.* J. Russo, *Odyssey III*; cf. Athen. V 193 a). On these terms see esp. Buchholz (1883) 186–194; Bruns (1970) Q57–Q59 and Rundin (1996) 185–186.

[21] For other, more rare and less relevant terms for feasting in Homer, cf. also Chantraine (1964) and Casevitz (1990).

[22] To be found only in *Od.* I 226 and XI 415. In later sources, there is a strong connection, especially in ideological terms, between *eranos* and the *symposion* (see above, p. 27 n. 26). Carlier (1984) 154 n. 66, may well be right in associating these Homeric hints with the situation described (interpolated, but formulaic nevertheless) in *Od.* IV 621–623 (but not, as he does as well, in *Od.* XVIII 275–279); similarly, S. West, *Odyssey I*, *ad* I 226. In Book IV of the *Odyssey*, sacrificial animals and wine are brought to the palace of Menelaos by the eventual participants in a feast, whereas their wives send along bread for the banquet. If Carlier is right, '*eranos* would be a typical scene of the traditional epic stock' (ibid.), so this type of banquet would be a well-defined thing for Homer. But even if Homer did understand this situation as an *eranos*, it is striking that the only particulars we get of this institution in Homer regard a contribution to the royal banquet and not an exchange between true social peers.

[23] For the occurrences, see *LfgrE*, *s.v.*

[24] See Chantraine, *s.vv.* and Beekes (after Frisk), *s.vv.*

naturally requires our special attention since it may at first sight appear to allude to a specific social event devoted to wine drinking.

Eilapinē,[23] just like *deipnon*, does not have a Greek etymology,[24] which is typical of many Greek 'cultural words' that reach back to a pre-Greek origin or have been borrowed from a neighbouring language. This time-honoured and duly solemn term seems very close in its meaning to *dais,* and it is closely associated to it in *Il.* XXIII 201.[25] In any case, the term teaches us very little about the 'realities' and 'ideologies' of the Homeric feast. Unlike *eilapinē*, the most popular term in this group, *dais*, derivative of *daiomai* ('to divide'), is highly revealing. Together with its cognates *daitē*, *daitys* (both terms used for 'meal', 'feast'), *daitymōn* ('guest, banqueter'), *daitros* ('divider, carver [or meat]', an important character in Homeric banquets) and the recurring verbs *dainymi* ('to give a banquet/feast') and *dainymai* ('to feast'), it points to the very peculiar notion of a banquet as an occasion for dividing up or sharing food (esp. meat) and drink, in particular, but most probably also the pleasure and privilege of participating in noble feasts.[26] For Homer, *dais* is the generic term for 'feasting', and all other types of banquet can be subsumed under this category.[27]

The most memorable and potentially most meaningful among the terms of this group is *dais eïsē*[28], the 'duly shared banquet' (thus *LSJ*[9]), which has long disquieted Homeric scholars. Ancient commentators already had this problem, since there are indisputable occurrences of the term in Homer where its interpretation as 'equal' (= *isos*) is impossible.[29] Referring the reader to *Il.* XXIII 810 and *Od.* XIV 435, ancient commentators (sch^{bT} *Il.* XXIV 69a) suggested understanding this expression as 'good feast' or 'due and behoving one'. Indeed, in several cases where a banquet is labelled as *dais eïsē*, Homer explicitly shows the diners as being given unequal shares of food or drink and/or some of them as singled out for the 'part of honour' (*geras*)

[25] See in particular Saïd (1979) 15.

[26] Cf. esp. Saïd (1979) 15–17; Casevitz (1990) 207–211; Rundin (1996) 183–188.

[27] See *Od.* I 226–227, where *eilapinē* and *gamos* ('wedding-feast', as e.g. in *Il.* XIX 299 and *Od.* IV 3–4), and perhaps also *eranos*, form its conceivable sub-categories.

[28] Cf. Beekes, *s.v. isos*: 'the apparent prothetic vowel in ἐ-(ϝ)ίσῃ is artificial'.

[29] See e.g. *Il.* IV 48 (= XXIV 69).

[30] See esp. *Od.* VIII 98. More on *geras* below, 4.4.1. See also *Od.* XIX 418–425, where the guests are offered a *dais eïsē*, for which (according to some manuscripts) the hosts 'thoughtfully cut' *moirai*, i.e. their due (and naturally unequal) portions.

offered to them by the host.[30] The conclusion drawn by modern scholars is convincing. What we face here is a traditional notion of equality, anachronistically speaking, close to Aristotle's 'geometrical equality': '*Das Gleiche ist als das Gebührende, Richtige, Gute aufgefaßt*' (Von der Mühll 1976 [1966], 396).[31] Thus, on the lexicographic level, at least, in Homer's ideal of feasting there is nothing to suggest the sort of rigorous 'arithmetical' equality emblematic of the ideology of the symposion.

Only once in the *Iliad* (IV 259–260), do we come across a direct hint at *gerousios oinos* (i.e. 'wine due to, or customary for, the elders'): 'during the banquet, when the best of Argives mix the fiery wine of the elders'. This isolated passage is ambiguous, but it is possible that what Homer had in mind was a well-defined social event, an institutionalized convivial occasion gathering the 'elders', not only for entertainment but, above all, for deliberation on important communal issues.[32] Such deliberations over wine also look customary in the Phaeacian Scheria (*Od.* XIII 8–9), where the expression *gerousios oinos* appears once again. In the *Iliad*, Agamemnon is at times urged to 'give a banquet of the elders' and such feasts form an important element of social life and the political decision-making process in the camp of the Achaeans.[33] However, the problem is that whenever such a venue emerges, there is no technical difference between the 'wine of the elders' and all other heroic banquets. Even worse, as Pierre Carlier rightly observed (Carlier 1984, 145–146), in Scheria (but also to some extent amongst the Achaeans) it is not

[31] Cf. Saïd (1979) 19–23; Rundin (1996) esp. 194–196. For potential colourings of the Homeric notion of equality, cf. also I. J. F. de Jong, *LfgrE* vol. II, col. 1229, *s.v.* *ἶσος*, *ἴσος*; *ἐίση* B1f (although (in B2a) the author discards the interpretation put forward by Von der Mühll).

[32] Cf., perhaps, *Il.* XVII 249–250, where we learn of the Achaean 'chiefs and rulers' who 'drink at public expense' (*δήμια πίνουσιν*) alongside Agamemnon and Menelaos. The relationship between the banquets of the elders sponsored by Agamemnon and those sponsored by the community is obscure and perplexing. But Homer did not need either to dwell on or clarify these issues. One way or another, this is presented by the poet as a sort of communal drinking and not as a private convivial occasion. See further below, 4.4.1.

[33] See, famously, *Il.* II 53 (cf. 85–86 and 194, with comm. *ad loc.* by Leaf I, p. 62), 404–408, and finally 430–433. Cf. IV 343–346 (with Leaf I, *ad loc.*, p. 179); IX 70, 89–90.

[34] Firstly, their 'twelve kings' (*Od.* VIII 390–391, cf. XIII 12), secondly, more numerous Phaeacian 'elders' (cf. e.g. VII 189). In *Od.* VIII 456, 'wine-drinking men' (*ἄνδρες οἰνοποτῆρες*), a Homeric hapax, may suggest a customary role of wine

altogether clear who exactly is entitled to participate in such meetings. Among the Phaeacians, two or perhaps even three groups, participating in a series of consecutive royal banquets and partly overlapping, must be represented.[34] The Achaean 'councillors' form a less vague group, but this is partly due to the logic of the plot. Far from being anonymous like the Phaeacian 'elders' and 'kings' assisting Alkinoos, they are all central characters in the *Iliad*. But even here there are some fluctuations as to the composition of the group of Agamemnon's 'councillors' who can dine and drink with him in his tent.[35] It is far from clear which group and which particular period occasions holding the *gerousios oinos*.

Now, it is interesting to confront the allegedly institutional *gerousios oinos* with a comparable expression put in the mouth of Hector who swears an 'oath of the elders' (γερούσιος ὅρκος) in *Il.* XXII 119, which will ultimately prove fatal. Just like in the case of the 'wine of the elders', this hint is enough for Homer to suggest a duly solemn and traditional institution, and this is as far as the ancient commentators could get (Sch^{bT} *Il.* XXII 199a; cf. sch^{D}). Nowhere else in the epic do we hear of this special oath,[36] but the term used by Homer nonetheless looks technical. And I think this is exactly the point about both expressions—they might have been left as such since they are self-explanatory to Homer's implied public. Of course, they might have belonged to the stock of traditional epic terminology, but Homer might have freshly coined them to add solemn colouring and to 'archaize' his socio-political or ritual 'realities', as he does time and again. If *gerousios oinos* was drawn from the stock of traditional epic

drinking for the self-definition of the Phaeacian élites (in general, cf. *Od.* VIII 248–249. On this passage, see below, 219). On the conceivably institutional aspect of this term see more below (οἰνοποτάζων in *Il.* XX 84, on Aeneas among the Trojan 'kings', is of course banal and offers no analogy whatsoever). Besides, Homer himself emphasizes this very aspect of the position of the superior king Alkinoos when for the first time fully introducing him in *Od.* VI 308–309.

[35] Carlier (1984) 146–148, distinguishes between the rather stable group of the members of Agamemnon's 'nocturnal council' (they are consistently called *boulēphoroi*, 'advisers'), who can dine with the supreme king at any time, in order to be consulted by him, including late in the night (cf. e.g. VII 344; IX 710; X 194–197; XXIV 650–652), and a wider group of 'kings' invited to participate in royal banquets and to 'deliberate' with the king, although their role during these banquets will be passive at best (those intervening will only be the aforementioned *boulēphoroi*). For this second group, see esp. IX 710 (with IX 74 and 89, for their big number) and perhaps also VII 323–344.

[36] *Il.* III 269–270 provides of course no analogy here.

diction, there is no reason not to believe that such an institution might have existed at some point in a more distant past in pre-Homeric Greek communities. But given the manner in which the poet(s) handles the term in both poems, there is no direct proof that the 'wine of the elders' was a historical institution in Homer's own lifetime, or that it was rooted in a relatively fresh 'social memory'. In a word, there may have been a historical link between the (hypothetical) institution of *gerousios oinos* and the archaic symposion, but we will not be able to grasp it following the logic of the 'Homeric world'.

Interestingly, despite the relative wealth of terms potentially alluding to different types of feasts and varying convivial occasions, the banquets we actually witness in the main plot in Homer are quite uniform. In part, this is obviously determined by the key themes of both poems and the logic of their respective plots. The majority of the feasts in the *Odyssey* are (or with the arrival of an unexpected guest, become) hospitality-banquets,[37] whereas those in the *Iliad* are generally concerned with wartime (i.e. political) deliberations. If one leaves aside the special case of the Ithacan Suitors, their common denominator is that they are all, or almost all, well-ordered royal banquets. This fact may well be due to the (hypothetically) dominating tenor of the underlying epic tradition, where such feasts must have been the most popular by far. But we must keep in mind that there is much at stake for Homer in the depiction of heroic banquets. Even in the *Iliad*, where up to a certain point the royal host Agamemnon makes one mistake after another, such feasts are idealized in order to yield a normative picture of the noble dining of heroes of old. And the *Odyssey* is even more carefully designed to this effect, featuring the unequalled banquets of the god-like Phaeacians. It is in this context, namely, as emerging from a poetic ideal and not some underlying historical realities, that we should interpret the socio-political implications of the royal feasts in Homer.[38]

In the famous opening lines of Book IX (ll. 5–11) of the *Odyssey*, Odysseus praises the situation when 'cheerful festivity' (*euphrosynē*)[39] reigns in the country (lit. 'over the whole people', ἔχῃ κάτα δῆμον ἅπαντα) as 'the finest of all things'. At the same time, the feasters in the palace are seated in an orderly manner listening to an *aoidos*, with

[37] For this notion, see in general Grottanelli (1981).
[38] But cf. below, Section 4.4.1.
[39] The terms seems to presuppose widely held cheerful banquets.

their tables laden with bread and meat and a cup-bearer filling their cups with wine. The harmony between the royal palace and the subjects in their respective banquets is openly presented as an ideal. In the *Nekyia* (*Od.* XI 185–187), Odysseus is (misleadingly) reassured by his dead mother as to the current state of affairs in Ithaca. We hear that his son Telemachus is in safe possession of Odysseus' lands (*temenea*) and participates in 'duly shared banquets' as it behoves the 'judging men' who exchange their feasts (. . . δαῖτας ἐΐσας | δαίνυται, ἅς ἐπέοικε δικασπόλον ἄνδρ' ἀλεγύνειν). Pedantically, scholars calculated that Telemachus must have been only fourteen years old at this point,[40] so he could not himself belong to the group of 'judging men'. Untrue as it is, the happy picture provides us with a generic group ideal and does not pertain to Telemachus' personal position in his community.

Of course, it is more than probable that arbitrating legal disputes and luxurious dining were important privileges of the actual élites of the time (the former competence is famously testified to by Hesiod). These lines, however, are more about what the world should look like than the historical realities of Homer's time. In other words, I think it would be far-fetched to say, as many scholars have, that exclusive legal authority and mutually shared feasts constituted the self-contained and rigorously closed social group of eighth century (or seventh century) *basilēes*.[41] We simply cannot press the testimony of Homer this far.[42] At this stage, it is safer to assume that the way Homer describes royal banquets essentially belongs to the realm of social aspirations and ideals and we cannot a priori assume that it (more or less) accurately depicts any historical reality.

[40] Stanford (1984) comm. *ad loc*. p. 388. Carlier (1984) 154 n. 65, based also on *Il.* XXII 494–499 (cf. *Il.* IX 485–491), suggests that a child can participate in banquets in Homer, so the apparent incoherence in our passage of the *Odyssey* does not exist. However, Homer speaks here not only of banquets, but of the judicial competences of the élite as well, so the generic interpretation of this passage seems valid still.

[41] For the shared or reciprocal banquets, see below, p. 213 n. 116.

[42] The image of the sad fate of the orphan Astyanax (*Il.* XXII 494–499), often paralleled with this passage, belongs to another 'register' of the poems and should be treated separately. See below, pp. 311–315.

4.2.2 Time Frame and Overall Organization

Following these lines, let us take a look at what I would be tempted to call the 'heroic norm' with respect to the organization of the banquet.

The feast usually takes place in the dining hall or *megaron*, a long hall at the heart of a hero's palace. Its general design has been aptly characterized by H. van Wees in referring to its simultaneous 'simplicity and luxury' (Van Wees 1995, 148).[43] In the Achaean camp in the *Iliad*, a spacious tent naturally replaces the *megaron*.

The time frame of a Homeric feast is a central issue in the argument that follows. Functionally, but also in a close connection with the religious and ethical tenor of the Homeric poems,[44] a banquet ordinarily follows an animal sacrifice.[45] There is a 'right time' for a feast at some point in the afternoon, once the heroes are done with their daily occupations, entertainments, or religious duties.[46] Heroes, and even gods, obligatorily end their feasting at sunset and go to bed, as Athena commands herself in *Od.* III 331–336.[47] Another important characteristic of the disposition of the Homeric feasts is that in principle heroes dine and drink simultaneously. This is particularly clear from the omnipresence of the recurrent formulaic line 'Once they satisfied their desire for drink and food' (αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ πόσιος καὶ ἐδητύος ἐξ ἔρον ἔντο).[48] As W. Arend puts it in his analysis of Homeric typical scenes, 'the interest in the meal as such is slight' (Arend 1933, 70)[49]. This closing formula

[43] Cf. Van Wees (1995) esp. 148–154. See also Bruns (1970) esp. Q46–Q49.

[44] See in general Saïd (1979) *passim*.

[45] See, e.g., *Il.* I 458–475 or *Od.* XVII 180–181.

[46] See esp. *Od.* XVII 170–176 (a strongly normative passage). Cf. *Od*. XII 439–440. To start a feast too early amounts to a scandalous thing: cf. *Od.* XIX 149–156.

[47] She is disguised as a mortal man at this point, but Homer's audience no doubt felt the normative weight of this passage. Cf. e.g. *Il.* I 427–476; *Od.* I 421–425; VII 188; IX 183–186; XII 23–31; XVIII 418–419 with 428; XIX 424–427. For gods, see e.g. *Il.* I 601–606.

[48] *Il.* I 469; II 432; VII 323; IX 92; 222; XIII 638; XXIII 57; XXIV 227; 628; *Od.* I 150; III 67; 473; IV 68; VIII 72; 485; XII 308; XIV 454; XV 143; 303; 501; XVI 55; XVII 99; XXIV 489.

[49] In general, see Arend (1933) 69–78, with his Table IV, 'schema' 8.

[50] This may be just an example of the workings of 'Zieliński's law' (Zielinski 1901) according to which the poet avoids presenting simultaneous events conceiving instead artificial sequences of episodes. Cf. a critical reappraisal of this rule by Krischer (1971) 91–129; see also Scodel (2008).

[51] The first to make this point was Van Leeuven (1912) 35–36, com. *ad Il.* I 469 and 471 ('Post cenam instituitur iam compotatio'); cf. Van Leeuven (1917) 69, com. *ad Od.* III 332–341.

(*Abschlußformel*) conveniently subsumes the whole course of a feast described in a typical scene, letting the poet focus on speeches or other important activities undertaken by the heroes during the banquet.[50]

Now, this generally acknowledged idea of the Homeric feast, which amounts to denying the presence of nocturnal drinking occasions—that is, simply put, the symposion—has been repeatedly questioned since the early 1980s.[51] In a fundamental study published in 1983, M. Vetta argued that Homer did in fact depict something close to the archaic symposion, a drinking bout following a feast and preceded by a libation scene (Vetta 1983*a*, XLI–XLIV). His argument was partly based on a recurrent formulaic line 'Once they poured a libation and drunk to their satisfaction.' (*αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ σπείσάν τε πίον θ', ὅσον ἤθελε θυμός*).[52] This line of reasoning has recently been adopted by G. Colesanti,[53] who studied the relevant typical and non-typical scenes in Homer. Before we use Homer in our enquiry into the origins of the symposion, we must reassess the value of this hypothesis. I shall deal not only with the scenes adduced to this effect by Vetta and Colesanti, but also with other passages in Homer where we come across scenes of night drinking.

In *Il.* VII 465–482, both Achaeans and Trojans dine, and in particular drink 'all night long' (*pannychioi*).[54] However, the situation is very peculiar. There is a ceasefire for burials of the dead on both sides, and the Achaeans work all day long on their new wall. What is more, Zeus is furiously thundering all night, so they are frightened and pour their libations from every cup they are about to drink (478–482), which seems to be an over-credulous and, all in all, vain gesture.[55] Drinking

[52] See *Il.* IX 177; *Od.* III 342; 395; VII 184; 228; XVIII 427; XXI 273.

[53] Colesanti (1999) esp. 45–57.

[54] Homer stresses the exceptional nature of the wine they drink in 467–471. Cf. below, p. 217, for *Od.* III 391–392.

[55] Cf. G. S. Kirk, *Iliad II*, p. 292 (com. *ad* VII 480): 'One of the surprisingly few Iliadic references to libation . . . '.

[56] See also Colesanti (1999) 48–49.

[57] For a thorough criticism of the Embassy on analytical grounds, see famously Page (1959) 297–315. As we shall see (below, p. 209), Book IX of the *Iliad* features also other unusual elements as regards drinking manners of Homeric heroes.

[58] Other examples of nocturnal dining stemming from the logic of the plot in the *Iliad* include e.g. X 578–579 (a nocturnal *deipnon* after the Doloneia) and XXIV 599–627 (Priam dining in Achilles' tent with the hero). In *Il.* VIII 503–509, a nocturnal feast by innumerable fires on the Trojan plain is an element of the 'psychological war' waged by the momentarily victorious Trojans against the Achaeans.

all night is definitely not something heroes normally do. In *Il.* IX 64–65 and 174–177 (cf. 705–707), the plot is particularly twisted as the Achaean 'elders' dine at night waiting for the return of their embassy to Achilles.[56] As the embassy departs in the evening, the nocturnal feast serves the requirements of the plot (which incidentally has disquieted many scholars on various grounds)[57] but certainly does not agree with a heroic norm as far as feasting is concerned.[58]

In this context, the most important passage of the *Odyssey* is III 389–396. After the aforementioned normative utterance by the disguised Athena, who urges the diners to end the public sacrificial feast for Poseidon on a seashore, the banquet nevertheless starts once again, this time in the palace of Nestor.[59] What is more, this is a gathering devoted to drinking, and an exclusive wine, aged eleven years, is served to the diners (391–392). Yet, Nestor has good reasons to proceed with drinking, or rather with drinking and pouring libations amidst intensive prayers (393–394: *πολλὰ . . . εὔχετ' ἀποσπένδων*). He has just witnessed an epiphany of Athena (371–379), which is not a common experience. And in his wisdom, he reacts immediately in this fashion, making the best wine available. On the next day, he will add to this ritual an animal sacrifice.[60] In Book VII of the *Odyssey*,[61] once again, the plot is very distorted. This is due to the dramatic effect for which Homer is striving. The suppliant Odysseus arrives exactly when the diners are about to finish, during the closing libations of the banquet of the Phaeacian 'kings' (136–138). Naturally, he is immediately offered a late meal (*dorpon*) and then Alkinoos orders his herald to mix wine for appropriate libations to Zeus Xeinios and for 'drinking to one's satisfaction'. For this is what 'those who have reverence for suppliants' (cf. 163–165 and 180–181) should do. Furthermore, after a courtly exchange of public speeches between Alkinoos and Odysseus, diners pour libations and 'drink to one's satisfaction' once again, before leaving the palace and letting the hosts speak with the suppliant even longer in private (228–233). Night-time drinking is

[59] Cf. Colesanti (1999) 49–50.

[60] In a similar vein already Van Leeuven (1917) 72, com. *ad* III 390.

[61] Cf. Colesanti (1999) 50.

[62] Another case of an irregular nocturnal feast in the *Odyssey* is fully understandable, too. In *Od.* XI 373–374 (cf. 379–382), the banquet lasts long into the night fuelled by Odysseus' thrilling tales. The hero wanted to stop it at the appropriate moment, but his public would not let him go.

[63] See below, pp. 230–231 with n. 184.

still introduced as an unusual thing, and its only justification being the exceptional circumstances of the arrival of an unexpected guest,[62] who may always be suspected of being a god in disguise.[63]

Thus, neither the recurrence of the formulaic line mentioning libation and drinking to one's satisfaction, nor the elaborate scenes just analysed can support the idea of a nocturnal drinking bout as something familiar to heroic etiquette. Time and again, the contexts of such scenes emphasize their exceptional character. Moreover, it is worth noting that all these elaborate scenes have something in common. Aside from the Embassy scenes in the *Iliad*, they all feature ritual libations as a vital practice, not mere formulaic embellishment.[64] This pious aspect of the scenes of night-time drinking seems very revealing. It looks like the poet was trying to compensate for, or at least justify, his decision to go against heroic decorum in each particular case. The symposion is definitely not something that would go well with the epic heroic conventions. For unambiguous scenes of nocturnal feasting, more naturally embedded in the plot, we must wait for the banquets of the Odyssean Suitors,[65] but these belong to other poetic registers and will be accordingly dealt with below (4.3.4).

4.2.3 Ceremony, Participants, Entertainment

We may go into detail once the general circumstances of the heroic feast in Homer are clarified. I will first turn my attention to the participants and ceremony of the banquet, and then move into a discussion of the social situation involved (4.2.4).

[64] Cf. Arend (1933) 76–78, who rightly classified the typical scenes involved as 'libation scenes'. It is true, as Colesanti (1999) 44, emphasizes, that nothing in the libation ritual necessitates the consecutive drinking of the humans present as it was the case for the 'libation and drinking' formula. As we have seen, however, Homeric morals only let heroes 'drink to [their] satisfaction' when pouring libations. So, whatever the pre-Homeric use of these formulas, they are fully meaningful in Homer. As we shall see below, Homer knew the nocturnal drinking we call symposion, but did not let it penetrate the normative world of his heroes.

[65] See, for the time being, *Od.* XVII 305–306 and esp. XVIII 304–310.

[66] Cf. below, p. 211.

[67] Note that Homeric tables must be relatively small and light as they are easily movable (*Od.* I 110–112 with 138).

[68] Cf. e.g. *Od.* XVII 330–331; XX 259.

[69] Cf. above, p. 120.

Noble guests dine seated 'in a row', or better yet: 'in order' (*hexeiēs*),[66] on chairs and thrones along the walls of the *megaron*, with their respective tables set before them.[67] If present, their inferiors might be seated on 'stools'.[68] Ancient scholars were well aware that sitting while dining and drinking was characteristic of the heroic times of old.[69] It is important to stress, however, that this is not just an 'archaizing' poetic image, but a hard reality of the time of the poet(s), since this picture is supported, in another poetic register, by the fabulous luxury of the banquets held by the Olympian gods with their feet on lavish footstools (*Il.* XIV 240–241).

In peacetime conditions, the servants attending the feast include the following: slave-girls (*amphipoloi*) assisting in the ritual ablutions and in setting a table in front of each guest; 'a reverend housekeeper' (*tamiē*) distributing bread; a meat carver (*daitros*); and a herald (*kēryx*) or a cup-bearer (*oinochoos*) pouring out the wine for the diners.[70] The wine is mixed in a *krater* by 'noble youngsters' (*kouroi* or *neoi*), that is, probably by aristocratic youth,[71] who also (or alternatively, the heralds or cup-bearers) assist in the opening (and closing) libations.[72] Quasi-realistically, male youngsters replace the female servants in the Achaean war camp of the *Iliad*, although it must be said that preparations for feasts are understandably much more laconic in this poem. Performers and entertainers of the Homeric banquets will be studied shortly.

One of the more debatable issues with respect to the participants of the heroic feasts is the presence of noble women. Some scholars energetically exclude them from banquets, whereas others offer no less vigorous affirmations of their presence.[73] But both sides in this debate ignore differences between diverse poetic registers and their respective conventions, striving for a uniform (and in fact composite) picture applicable to the 'Homeric world' as such. However, if we do take these differences into account it becomes clear that only exceptional, godly or godlike women, such as Helen in the palace of

[70] For a full scenario, see e.g. *Od.* I 130–143.

[71] Cf. e.g. *Il.* I 470; IX 175; *Od.* {I 148}; III 339; XXI 271. But see below (n. 75), on *kouroi* and *neoi* in the banquets of the Suitors. See also above (p. 33 n. 49), for the problem of the social status of the youngsters attending archaic symposia.

[72] Cf. below, p. 208 with n. 78.

[73] For recent contributions to this debate, see esp. Van Wees (1995) 154–163 (*pro*, limiting it to a host's wife, but excluding daughters and unmarried girls) and Rundin (1996) 189–190 (*contra*, apart from a few 'anomalous' cases in Homer).

Menelaos or Arete in the fairy-tale Scheria, can enjoy the privilege of feasting with or even talking to men, including unknown strangers. But Nestor's noble wife, for one, is conspicuously absent from the normative heroic banquets. Penelope's case, whose moral profile clearly stands out as compared with those of the Suitors in the anarchic world of Ithaca, is more revealing still. I think we may safely conclude that neither the heroic norm nor the popular morality of the time could accept mortal or moral women among male diners during a feast. The fact that heroic banquets in Homer offer no erotic flavour whatsoever seems closely related to this.[74]

'Regular' participants in the heroic feasts include the host and his adult male offspring,[75] alongside the guests he has invited and unexpected newcomers: humble suppliants or anonymous noblemen waiting to reveal their identity. Interestingly, the beggar, although conventionally called the 'destroyer of feasts' (δαιτῶν ἀπολυμαντήρ),[76] never visits orderly royal banquets in Homer, which seems to belong to another trait of the heroic ideal.

The ceremony of the feast is deeply religious. The introductory rites including ablutions and libations have already been mentioned.[77] The closing libations of a banquet feature no less prominently in Homer. Among the Phaeacians, it is customary to offer the very last libation to Hermes.[78]

[74] As might be expected, such undertones may be detected in the feast of the Suitors; see below, p. 226 and in general 4.3.4.

[75] The category of 'noble youth' (conceived as sub-adult nobles) as participants of heroic banquets is at best blurred, although some association of noble children and youngsters with feasts does exist in Homer (cf. *Il.* IX 485–491; XXII 492–498; *Od.* XI 185–186).

[76] *Od.* XVII 220; 377.

[77] Cf. also e.g. *Il.* IX 656–657 with 712; *Od.* III 45–63; VII 137–138; XVIII 419; 423–427; XXI 263–273.

[78] *Od.* VII 136–138. J. B. Hainsworth, *Odyssey I*, *ad loc.* suggests that Hermes is venerated in this manner as a the giver of sleep (cf. *Il.* XXIV 445–446, with com. *ad loc.* by N. Richardson, *Iliad VI*, p. 318, and esp. *Od.* V 47–48). In *Od.* III 331–342, we learn of an otherwise unknown ritual accompanying the libations, namely that of 'the cutting and burning of tongues' (as a sort of, say, postponed firstlings?) of a sacrificial animal (cf. S. West, *Odyssey I*, *ad loc.*). See also Meuli (1946) 222–223.

[79] Cf. already ancient commentators on *Il.* I 471 (sch^{bT} and sch^{D}).

[80] As in *Il.* I 471; IX 176; *Od.* III 340; VII 183; XXI 272.

[81] *Od.* XIII 54; XVIII 425.

The details of the libation ritual bring us to the issue of wine use and wine manipulations in Homer. The formulaic line crucial in this context had long been rather obscure, until Paul Mazon finally elucidated it in 1937 (Mazon 1937):[79] 'to all the diners, they [i.e. a cup-bearer, a herald, or 'noble youngsters'—M.W.] distributed it [i.e. wine] pouring the first drops for a libation to their cups' (*νώμησαν δ' ἄρα πᾶσιν ἐπαρξάμενοι δεπάεσσιν*).[80] There is likewise an interesting variant: 'he distributed [wine] standing over each diner in turn' (*νώμησεν δ' ἄρα πᾶσιν ἐπισταδόν*).[81] I think we should understand this image, elaborating Mazon's analyses, in the following manner.[82] The cup-bearer (whoever he might be) pours a few drops of wine into the cup of each diner in turn (not necessarily in a row, but following social rank or hierarchy[83]). Once the libations are duly executed, most probably by all the diners simultaneously,[84] the cup-bearer follows the same order in filling and then refilling their cups as necessary. Note that this implies that each participant of the feast has his own drinking cup,[85] so wine does not circulate in the *megaron* as it did in the archaic and classical symposia.

Actually, this is as far as we can go in understanding the heroic wine ceremony, darkened for us by the formulaic brevity of the lines involving wine drinking.[86] Only once in the *Iliad* do we hear of a hero pledging a toast to another hero at a banquet (IX 224). And this, strikingly, during a (partly nocturnal) feast dominated by tension between the outraged Achilles and the ambassadors of his enemy Agamemnon. This is a courtly, but far from intimate or pleasurable occasion. Moreover, the wine is much stronger than the heroic norm requires—already scandalous for ancient commentators on Homer.[87]

[82] Mazon (1937) *passim*, esp. 323–324. In a similar vein, but without referring to Mazon, G. S. Kirk, *Iliad I*, p. 102 (*ad Il.* I 470–471).

[83] Cf. *Od.* III 45–64, for the order of precedence in pouring libations.

[84] In a seated position, as in *Od.* XIII 56, or standing, as in *Od.* III 341.

[85] See also e.g. *Il.* IX 203.

[86] Cf. above, p. 203.

[87] See, famously sch^{bT} *Il.* IX 203a and sch^{D} on *Il.* IX 203. Achilles (and by implication Homer as well) was defended by Aristotle (*Poet.* 1461 a 15). In the same Book IX, with its particularly twisted plot (see above), we find the Achaean 'elders' waiting for the return of the ambassadors to Achilles while 'drinking to one another standing up' (670–671). The gods, however, know this custom, too, when addressing their just arrived family members (Il. XV 85–86; with comm. *ad loc.* by R. Janko, *Iliad IV*, p. 237–238; cf. *Il.* XXIV 101–102).

[88] For the time being, cf. *Od.* XVIII 121 with 151–153.

[89] See above, p. 204, on *Il.* VII 478–482.

The heroic ideal of feasting is stretched to the extreme in this episode. To learn more from Homer about drinking habits, we must wait for the banquets of the Suitors in the *Odyssey*.[88] Once again, heroic decorum prevents the poet from showing heroes enjoying their wine too immoderately. Interestingly, whereas pouring libations from each cup one is about to drink is an unusual and slightly exaggerated gesture in the *Iliad*,[89] the contrast between the normative heroic banquet and various horrible feasts plays a prominent role in the *Odyssey*. Whenever the poet's attention focuses on a pious hero drinking his wine, in many cases he pours a libation from every cup he drinks.[90]

This is obviously a highly conventional picture. Wine drinking as a central pleasure of the feast is self-evident to Homeric heroes.[91] And so is the overwhelming effect of alcohol on human behaviour, making serious men sing, speak softly, dance, and utter 'words better left unspoken'.[92] However, all this only occurs in flashbacks, tales, or parables, not in the main progression of the plot. And the same holds true for the downright drunk characters in Homer.[93] It is all the more striking that 'drunkard' (lit. 'heavy with wine', *oinobarēs*) is the very first word of abuse that comes to Achilles' mind when furiously swearing at Agamemnon (*Il.* I 225), prior even to imputing deceitfulness to him (or perhaps thievery) and cowardice—all more apropos in the immediate context. We will have to take a closer look at the feasts of the Suitors to witness drunken diners in action.[94]

[90] See e.g. *Od.* XVIII 151.

[91] Cf. *Od.* I 258 (Athena in disguise is speaking here).

[92] *Od.* XIV 463–466. I shall return to these important lines below.

[93] See *Od.* III 138–140 (drunken Achaeans after the sacking of Troy, in a story told by Nestor); IX 45–46 (intoxicated army after sacking of the town of Kikones; told by Odysseus); IX 61–65 with X 554–560 (drunken Elpenor accidentally dies falling down from a roof; told by Odysseus); IX 373–374 (drunken monster Polyphemos vomiting asleep; told by Odysseus). Cf. the previous note, an ingenious parable by Odysseus in *Od.* XIV 463–466. Cf. also the tragic irony of the tale of drunken Centaurs told by one of the Suitors in XXI 293–304.

[94] See below, Section 4.3.4.

[95] *Il.* XIII 731; *Od.* I 152; 421 (= XVIII 304); XXI 430.

[96] See e.g. *Il.* XIII 731; *Od.* I 159; 351; 421 (= XVIII 304); VIII 44–45.

[97] E.g. *Il.* II 600; III 54; XIII 731; *Od.* I 159; VIII 98–99; 248; XVII 270–271; XXI 429–430; XXIII 143–145.

[98] Naturally, performers of that kind are not to be found in the *Iliad*. For this fact and its possible implications, see recently Murray (2008) 164 and *passim*.

[99] See below, pp. 227–228.

Homer famously calls other types of entertainment suitable for heroes 'ornaments of a feast' (*Od.* I 152; XXI 430): namely, dancing (*orchēstys* or *molpē*),[95] singing (*aoidē*),[96] or *kithara* (or a *phorminx*)[97]—all alluding to performances by professional dancers or an *aoidos*.[98] It is noteworthy that expert entertainers execute all performances during a heroic feast. There are only a few cases in the *Odyssey* where we may hesitate between professional dancers and diners themselves dancing at a banquet.[99] Symptomatically, the feasters in question are the Suitors of Penelope. If we leave them aside for the moment, the only exception to this rule of professionalism are the 'tales' (*mythoi*) offered by a diner, particularly skilled and experienced, to entertain his (or her) fellows. Each time, however, such a performer is duly compared to an *aoidos* or replaces one when presenting typically rhapsodic poetic material.[100] To get a glimpse into genuine table talk, we must again wait for the Suitors and their hubristic utterances in the house of Odysseus.[101]

4.2.4 The Heroic Feast as a Social Event

Unlike drinking habits, the social dynamics of the heroic feast were a matter of great concern and careful elaboration by the poet(s). In the first place, there is a carefully observed order of precedence in seating the diners. The main seat belongs to the host and his favourite son will sit beside him.[102] Whenever an unexpected guest or suppliant appears, this 'second best' seat should be assigned to him as a sign of respect.[103] There is also a seat in 'the farthest corner' of the *megaron*,

[100] Cf. Helen, in *Od.* IV 238–239; and Odysseus, explicitly compared to an *aoidos*, in *Od.* XI 368.

[101] See below, Section 4.3.4.

[102] In general, cf. *Il.* VIII 162; XXIV 100; *Od.* III 469; IV 51 (cf. VI 308–309). See also next note.

[103] *Od.* VII 169–171; VIII 469.

[104] See *Od.* XXI 145–146. Cf. *Od.* XXII 340–341. This accords well with the archaeologically attested realities of an eighth-century dining hall in Eretria, as we have already seen.

[105] See *Odyssey III*, p. 210–217, with fig. 9 on p. 211. Cf., above, Leaf I, p. 586–589 (Appendix C).

[106] See esp. IX 7–10, in the mouth of Odysseus who utters these lines in the palace of the king Alkinoos, whose special position when drinking is incontestable (cf. VI 308–309, for which see above, n. 34).

[107] See above, pp. 198–199.

which in topographical terms happens to be close to the customary position of the *krater*.[104] Without sketching the entire plan of the heroic *megaron*,[105] it seems fair to assume that given this highly hierarchical seating arrangement, the traditional epic adverb *hexeiēs*, used in relation to the way diners are seated and served, must generally mean 'in a good order' for Homer rather than technically 'in a row', 'one after another'.[106] This would be similar to the actual meaning of the Homeric 'equal feast' (*dais eïsē*), which does not imply a rigorous, or 'arithmetic', equality between the feasters.[107] The link between favoured seats, better portions of meat and constant refills of wine are seemingly taken for granted.[108] So we have to assume that Homer envisioned that the host and his protégés were attended in a special manner: faster, more often, and with better dishes and wine than the rest of the diners.

The most important factor and the crucial idea determining the social and political aspect of heroic dining is *geras*, the 'part of honour'.[109] Thus, in reward for his martial accomplishments, Agamemnon honours Ajax with a special share of meat (*Il.* VII 321–322).[110] In a similar vein, in a passage alluded to previously (*Il.* VIII 161–162), the Achaeans honour Diomedes with a privileged seat, distinct portions of meat, and 'full cups' of wine.[111] The same is true of subjects who customarily venerate their brave kings in a similar way, providing them with 'a seat, meat, and many wine-cups' (*Il.* XII 310–312).[112] A host is also supposed to honour his guests with a *geras* of meat.[113] An honoured guest may in his turn privilege someone else with a portion of his share, as Odysseus famously does for the singer Demodokos (*Od.* VIII 470–483). This redistributive principle of *geras*

[108] See e.g. *Il.* VIII 161–162 and IV 261–263.

[109] Of the immense scholarship on the issue, see in particular *Homers Ilias* I.2, comm. *ad Il.* I 118–129 (with bibliography); Jeanmaire (1939) 72–84; Saïd (1979) esp. 19–23; Nagy (1979); Carlier (1984) 151–162; Murray (1993) [1978], Index *s.v.* 'geras'; Rundin (1996) 196–200.

[110] Cf. also *Il.* IX 207; *Od.* IV 65 and XIV 437.

[111] See also *Il.* IV 257–263 and *Il.* X 217.

[112] See comm. *ad loc.* in B. Hainsworth, *Iliad III*, p. 352 (the lines are repeated in *Il.* XII 319–321 as 'fat sheep and honey-sweet wine of choice'. See also *Il.* XVII 249–250 (Achaean leaders who 'drink at public expense', on which see above). Cf. *Od.* VII 8–11 (a woman given to Alkinoos by the *dēmos* as a *geras*).

[113] As in *Od.* IV 65–67.

[114] See below, pp. 229–230.

[115] Symptomatically, in a famous passage of the *Iliad* (IX 185–189), Achilles competently plays a *phorminx* in front of his tent before a banquet. No Homeric

can thereby further 'hierarchize' the group of diners from above, so to say, down the social scale. The *geras* principle is so important for heroic feasting that it becomes a favoured motif of brutal convivial jokes by the Suitors of Penelope.[114]

Unlike the symposion, there is no rivalry or competition whatsoever between diners during heroic feasts, so no convivial contest is ever possible. This can be understood in a wider context on two different levels. On the one hand, convivial performances of any kind by the diners themselves are practically non-existent.[115] On the other hand, the 'part of honour' is apportioned by the host of a royal banquet single-handedly and arbitrarily. In short, inner hierarchies during the banquet fully depend on the king. More importantly, the king distributes the *geras* as a reward for previous favours or accomplishments, or in anticipation of future ones. A guest of honour, suppliant, or even a singer may also deserve a *geras*. In a word, hierarchies operative in a feast are fundamentally determined by external social rankings and general external socio-political dynamics, considerations that go far beyond the pleasurable feasting occasion.

Unlike the symposion, the heroic *dais* is not a self-contained, isolated, and socially dynamic occasion for establishing momentary hierarchies among the feasters based mainly on their (cultural) performances and constructing a radical, if fleeting, equality. This is an entirely different social situation, creating a strong sense of community centred on the host of the feast—the natural leader of this hierarchical community.[116] If we leave aside the feasts that do not belong to the category of well-ordered ones, it cannot be a

hero does a similar thing during one, but here we have a direct hint that a nobleman may (and perhaps should) be trained in music. Achilles' behaviour seems to emphasize his withdrawal from fighting (cf. *Il.* II 773–775, where the Myrmidons devote themselves to physical training otherwise unheard of in the *Iliad*).

[116] For mutually shared élite banquets, see e.g. *Od.* I 374–375 (= II 139–140); cf. *Il.* XXII 492–498 and *Od.* XI 185–186. Furthermore, in Homer we hear of *eranos* (cf. above, p. 197 n. 22), but the only passage associated with it by some scholars pictures Menelaos' subjects providing their contributions to a shared banquet to the king's palace (*Od.* IV 621–623). Below, we shall see that the reciprocal type of feasting belongs to another poetic register of the poems.

[117] Cf. e.g. *Il.* IV 343–346. In a way, the feast in Achilles' tent in Book IX of the *Iliad* encapsulates the challenge he poses to the supreme authority of Agamemnon. This may perhaps be alluded to by Odysseus in IX 225–228.

[118] In other 'registers' of the poems, we hear, however, of feasts held by other members of local polities. Cf. below, p. 236.

coincidence that, in both poems, we see only royal banquets held by a king acting as a superior political authority within his polity.[117] A *dais* held by an aristocrat in Nestor's Pylos or in Menelaos's Sparta is simply inconceivable and to find such feasts on Ithaca, we need a long absence of the king.[118] The realities of the heroic banquet—in this case, the socio-political implications of élite feasting—seem once again confined to the normative register of the Homeric poems.

* * *

In summary, we have no night-time feasting, no division between dining and drinking, no full-scale drinking with all its natural consequences, no women and no eroticism, no equality, no competition, and no performances by the diners. If we add to this list the 'simple luxury' of quantity rather than quality and variety of food, drink, and other 'embellishments of the banquet', the contrasts between the symposion and the regular feasting of Homeric heroes could not be more pronounced. Yet all this is just one side of the coin. To see the other side, we have to penetrate other poetic registers of the Homeric epics.

4.3 THE SYMPOSION IN HOMER

4.3.1 Sympotic Realities in Homer

As already mentioned, for purely chronological reasons, I assume some familiarity by Homer with the symposion. When dealing with the symposion in Homer, although it remains absent from the main development of the plot of both poems, I hope to flesh out some of my general hypotheses from the previous chapter, which were based on the fragmentary, and in each case one-sided, testimony of the 'Cup of Nestor' and LG architecture.

I begin with a passage of the *Iliad* which has curiously been neglected by scholars dealing with Homeric banquets. In *Iliad* II 123–130, a very peculiar image is used by Agamemnon to strengthen the morale of his fleeing army. We are so numerous, he says, that it is a shame to let Troy survive:

> . . . [I]f both sides were to be willing, Achaians and Trojans, to cut faithful oaths of truce, and both to be numbered, and the Trojans were to be counted by those with homes in the city, while we were to be allotted in tens, we Achaeans, and each one of our tens chose a man

> of Troy to pour wine for it, still there would be many tens left without a wine steward (ἡμεῖς δ' ἐς δεκάδας διακοσμηθεῖμεν Ἀχαιοί, | Τρώων δ' ἄνδρα ἕκαστοι ἐλοίμεθα οἰνοχοεύειν, | πολλαί κεν δεκάδες δευοίατο οἰνοχόοιο). By so much I claim we the sons of the Achaeans outnumber the Trojans . . . (tr. R. Lattimore).

Such banquets never appear in Homeric epics, nor are they compatible with what may be envisioned for the traditional background of this poetry. Nevertheless, to be operative in such a comparison the image must have been not merely comprehensible but in fact self-explanatory to the public of the *Iliad*. This is a typical case of what I dubbed 'non-traditional referentiality', referring the audience to their everyday experience. The passage attests to the existence of intimate gatherings administered by a cup-bearer and devoted primarily to wine-drinking, which is an image totally incompatible with the normative heroic picture studied in the previous section. Moreover, the idea of interchangeable 'tens' of drinking warriors is hardly consistent with an extremely hierarchical feast dominated by its royal host. I believe this implies the audience's acquaintance with small and most likely egalitarian gatherings of fellow drinkers.

We find yet another striking clue in the palace of the Phaeacian king Alkinoos. In *Od.* VII 98–102, we read that 'There [i.e. in the *megaron* of the palace—M.W.] the leaders of the Phaeacians sat and drank and ate, for they had great store,[119] and there were young men fashioned all of gold and in their hands holding flaring torches who stood on the strong-compounded base, and shed a gleam through the house by night, to shine on the feasters (l. 102: φαίνοντες νύκτας κατὰ δώματα δαιτυμόνεσσι)'.[120] This is obviously a purely imaginary scene, but I would stress that the motif of a happy nocturnal feast never appears in our epic material, so it cannot draw on some (hypothetical) traditional stock of epic images. Neither Phaeacians, nor gods, nor Ethiopians, nor any other fabulous folk ever revel during the night. Even the forever-happy family of Aiolos, which spends its life dining abundantly day after day in a *megaron* on a fabulous floating island, obligatorily goes to bed at sunset (*Od.* X 5–12).

Since the Phaeacians of Homer always go to bed with the sun as well, their fantastic golden machines are, so to speak, useless in the

[119] For ἐπηετανός, 'abundant', in l. 99 (cf. *Od.* X 427) see Chantraine and Beekes, *s.v.*

[120] For other golden 'robots' devised by Hephaestus, see *Il.* XVIII 417–420 (with comm. *ad loc.* M. W. Edwards, *Iliad V*, p. 195 and Leaf II, p. 298) and 373–379.

literary economy of the *Odyssey*. Therefore, we can suppose that they serve no objective other than showing the extraordinary wealth and happiness of the Phaeacians, and their king Alkinoos in particular. Nevertheless, the image of a nocturnal feast would have been quite unintelligible to the public if they had not known it from other, non-mythical, realities. The poet clearly refers his audience to its extra-textual experience. If we were to translate the fabulous wealth of the Phaeacians into human terms, it looks like specialized tools used to 'give light by night to the diners' were a conceivable element of a rich man's housewares. Consequently, night-time dining must have been an obvious thing for the contemporaries of the *Odyssey*.

It is important to note that the passage attesting to the habit of nocturnal feasting appears in a very peculiar poetic register, namely in the world of the legendary, eternally happy, and godlike Phaeacians, where the heroic norm observed elsewhere in the human register of the poem seems less solid.

In *Od*. XVIII 307–310, we find confirmation that there were stands on hand to be used for holding torches during nocturnal banquets in the *megaron*. But this scene, staged in the house of Odysseus, is more revealing. Let me quote the disguised Odysseus' reaction when the hall was lit by the female servants of the house (313–319): 'you maids of Odysseus . . . , go back into the house where the respected queen is. . . . But I myself will provide the light for all of these people [i.e. for the Suitors—M.W.]. And even if they wish to keep at it until the high-throned dawn, they will not prevail over me. I am very enduring (*αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ τούτοισι φάος πάντεσσι παρέξω. | εἴ περ γάρ κ' ἐθέλωσιν ἐϋθρονον Ἠὼ μίμνειν, | οὔ τί με νικήσουσι· πολυτλήμων δὲ μάλ' εἰμί*)'. Once more, it looks fully conceivable (to Odysseus and the servants, in any event) that the diners would be banqueting till dawn.[121]

[121] I wonder whether the response of a servant named Melanthô to the hero should be considered important for my present purpose. She refers to his intoxication (and to his *hubris*) to account for the fact that the beggar 'speaks out boldly and at length among many men' (329–330). But what is at stake here is also his apparent aspiration to participate in the entertainment of the Suitors on an equal footing despite his humble social position. It is enough to mention his highly competitive words *οὔ τί με νικήσουσι*, 'they shall not outdo me at all', rather inappropriate to a beggar or to a (self-proclaimed) servant. Cf. the famous bow competition, when Odysseus in disguise successfully aspires to the rivalry of the Suitors (see below, pp. 223–224). Here, the 'beggar' is obviously also claiming a position that is not his own. If so, it looks as if the endurance of an aristocrat who is capable of holding out at a banquet till the dawn, was an important component of the convivial ethics of the day—just like it was the case in the classical symposion.

4.3.2 Sympotic Pleasures and Luxurious Lifestyle in Homer

On Ithaca, where the absence of the king, who should be the pivot of a well-ordered community, obviously loosens normative heroic convention, we can find confirmation of the existence of some crucial sympotic realities in the times of Homer, and we can also glimpse some elements of the sympotic ethics of the time.[122]

As we have seen in the previous section (4.2), heroic feasts in Homer are extremely abundant, but their luxury is relative and rather austere, suited—in their diet, pastimes, and etiquette—to the severe heroes of the past. Now, what is particularly striking when reading Homer is the fact that time and again one comes across extremely luxurious habits and entertainments that plainly contradict this picture. As might be expected, such images are never straightforwardly operative in the normative heroic register of the poems.

The unheroic luxuries of a banquet are plentiful in Homer. In the preliminaries of his tale of Polyphemos, Odysseus mentions the exceptionally good wine he was given by Maron son of Euantheus from Maroneia,[123] a priest of Apollon—wine so strong that it had to be mixed with twenty measures of water to be fit for humans (*Od.* IX 196–211). We also learn of the Lemnian wine given to the Achaeans by Euenos (*Il.* VII 467–471). And Nestor offers his guests an eleven-year-old wine from his special supply (*Od.* III 390–392). These are all exceptional passages.[124] But, clearly, Homer's audience was supposed to appreciate and to enjoy such pieces of information, implying some level of wine-connoisseurship among his public.

Another potentially meaningful element of convivial luxury conventionally effaced by the poet(s) is the *krater*, the most important and symbolically laden prop of the archaic and classical symposion.

[122] For a more systematic treatment of the feasts of the Suitors, see below, Section 4.3.4. In general, see Slater (1990).

[123] Cf. comm. *ad loc.* by A. Heubeck, *Odyssey II*, p. 25. On Maron, Apollon, and Dionysus see also below, n. 215. Wine of this region was called Ismarian already by Archilochus, fr. 2 West^2.

[124] In two last cases, as already mentioned above, we are in very special and religiously laden circumstances and—it should not be overlooked—during a nocturnal banquet at that. The extremely strong wine of Maron, in its turn, will play a fundamental role in Odysseus' escape from the cave of Polyphemos.

[125] For *keimēlia*, see in particular Finley (1988) [1954], esp. 61–66. On the opposition between *keimēlia* and *probata* see Benveniste (1969) vol. I, 43–45.

Although it plays a central role in Homeric wine ritual and has a customary place in the topography of the *megaron*, its presence in the course of the heroic banquets is at best inconspicuous, if anything. We do not see it among the 'movable valuables' (*keimēlia*) stored in a hero's treasury.[125] Meanwhile, among the ritually exchanged prestigious gifts, *kraters* of precious metals are among the most memorable items.[126] The same kind of vessel features prominently among the prizes set by Achilles for the funeral games of Patroklos (*Il.* XXIII 740–747 with 778–779). More importantly still, in the *Iliad* (VI 526–529) the brief and somewhat enigmatic mention of a '*krater* of liberty' (κρητῆρα . . . ἐλεύθερον) to be prepared in the Trojan palace is enough to evoke the restored peace, leisure, and pleasurable intimacy between Trojan men—once the Achaeans have been driven away.[127] Despite appearances, huge mixing-bowls (and possibly other impressive elements of wine-drinking sets, too)[128] must therefore have been important status markers of the élites of the time.

The unheroic convivial customs referred to by Homer sometimes seem much more sophisticated than we might a priori expect of the eighth- or seventh-century realities. When the beggar-Odysseus last sees his beloved dog Argos, he (deceitfully) hypothesizes the animal's superiority over the 'table-dogs, raised by lords for the sake of adornment' (*Od.* XVII 309–310: τραπεζῆες κύνες . . . ἀγλαΐης δ' ἕνεκεν κομέουσιν ἄνακτες). The contrast between hunting-dogs and pets embellishing aristocratic banquets is curious indeed. Even in the archaic vase painting, the dogs depicted on pots as aristocratic status symbols look perfectly suitable for hunting.[129] This is again an extra-textual reference which the audience requires in order to appreciate the past values of the brave Argos, and therefore we cannot help but conclude that pets of that kind existed in Homer's contemporary world.

[126] See *Od.* IV 615–619 (cf. XV 114–123 and 103–104); IX 203–205; XXIV 275. In general, see Murray (1993) [1978], 48–49; Scheid-Tissinier (1994); and esp. Crielaard (2003) as well as Zurbach (2010), for an overview of the theory of gift-exchange as applied to Homer in modern scholarship. In general, cf. also Herman (1987) esp. Chapter 4.

[127] I fully agree with the 'sympotic reading' of this scene by Irwin (2005) 45/46 n. 28.

[128] Cf. Coldstream (1983*a*).

[129] See esp. Fehr (1971) 29 and index, *s.v.* 'Hund'; Dentzer (1982) 442. Cf. Solon, fr. 23 W^2 (= *Theogn.* 1253–1254) and *Theogn.* 1255–1256. In general, cf. Schmitt & Schnapp (1982) and Chapter 5 (by A. Schnapp) in *La Cité des images* (1984), as well as Barringer (2001) Index *s.v.* 'dogs'.

But there is perhaps something more to this image. The mention of the unmanly pastimes of the 'lords' (*anaktes*) is deliberately contrasted with the austere lifestyle and values of the heroes, implying the soft, if not effeminate, nature of the former group. Here, the 'lords' most probably stand for the Suitors who were long unable to appreciate the value of this superior hound, letting him deteriorate in deplorable conditions.

In the next section we shall see that alongside their many crimes, only the Suitors of Penelope raise erotic subjects during a feast.[130] In the famous manifesto of the Phaeacian *dolce vita* (*Od.* VIII 249), we also find 'soft beds' (*eunai*) mentioned alongside feasts and their 'embellishments' (i.e. song and dance), hot baths, and delicate garments. This sequence made some scholars suspect an erotic nuance, allegedly suggested by the mention of beds,[131] but this seems farfetched. Now, among the horrors committed by the Suitors in the house of Odysseus are regular sexual contacts with some of his female servants, in acts of infidelity to their masters. At the occasion of their cruel punishment, we find one of the extremely rare Homeric allusions to the 'works of Aphrodite' in a human context as seen from a female perspective (*Od.* XXII 444–445).[132] If we combine this with the scene in which the disguised Odysseus was at pains to chase the maids out of the Suitor's nocturnal feast,[133] a legitimate question arises as to their potentially sexual role in the banquets. To take their behaviour as also alluding to sympotic *hetairai* would perhaps be too much, although we must not forget that a close link between the banquet, wine drinking, and the 'pleasures of Aphrodite' is unambiguously confirmed as an element of the convivial ethos for this period by the testimony of the epigram of the 'Cup of Nestor'.[134]

Having said that, there are passages in Homer that suggest a rather unambiguous connection between banquets and eroticism. In a witty exchange between Odysseus and Eumaios, the former declares that if admitted he would go to the town to attend the feasts of the Suitors (*Od.* XV 319–324). To make this plan look more plausible, he advertises his skills in 'servicing' (*drēstosynē*), including taking care of the

[130] See below, in particular p. 226 with n. 165.

[131] See e.g. *Odyssey I* (J. B. Hainsworth *ad loc.*): 'εὐναί: no more than "bed" is required for the sense . . . , but the erotic nuance cannot be excluded'.

[132] Cf. e.g. *Od.* XV 420–422.

[133] *Od.* XVIII 307–342. Cf. above, p. 216 with n. 121.

[134] See also below, p. 265.

[135] For this important claim, see below, p. 310.

fire, carving meat, and pouring wine—'because this is how the low-born should serve the aristocrats'.[135] Eumaios tries to disillusion him by claiming there is no chance he will be accepted by the Suitors (330–334), since they already have their own attendants (*hypodrēstēres*) of a totally different kind (331–332): 'Unlike you, they are young (*neoi*), beautifully clothed in *chlainai* and *chitones*, with their heads always shining anointed with oil and they have beautiful countenances (αἰεὶ δὲ λιπαροὶ κεφαλὰς καὶ καλὰ πρόσωπα)'.

What we face here is the double contrast between the beggar-Odysseus and the 'youngsters'. In conformance with a well-known epic convention,[136] their beautiful appearance unequivocally suggests their noble birth, whereas Odysseus poses as a *kakos*. Likewise, they are young and appealing to look at, while he is old and ugly.[137] Eumaios is too polite to say this explicitly, but in his speech he emphasizes the overall luxury of the feasts of the Suitors, including 'well-polished tables'. With his current appearance, the beggar simply does not fit in there.

There is a problem with determining who exactly these young attendants might be. The *neoi* we regularly meet at the banquets of the Suitors are just younger members of their group, who themselves also aspire to the hand of Penelope. They may obey the orders of their older fellows from time to time,[138] but they are essentially their equals. Only once (*Od.* XXI 271–272) do we witness them mixing and distributing wine,[139] which is a normal thing for 'the young' to do elsewhere in the *Odyssey* and the *Iliad*.[140] In principle, this is what heralds usually do among the Suitors.[141] There is some confusion, then, as to the status of the *neoi* in the house of Odysseus, but in the passage under scrutiny the point is their sexual allure. This impression is confirmed by two other Homeric passages.

[136] See, e.g., *Od.* IV 27, 62–64 and *Il.* XXIV 376–377.

[137] Later on, the beggar-Odysseus' ugliness will be an important theme of the convivial jokes by the Suitors; see below, pp. 230–231.

[138] Thus, e.g., in *Od.* XXI 178–185.

[139] Note that *Od.* I 148 is most probably interpolated.

[140] Cf. also *Il.* I 463; *Od.* III 460 (in Pylos).

[141] The best treatment of the issue in Wolicki (2000), esp. 42–72, with relevant bibliography.

[142] For this scene, see more below, pp. 222–223.

[143] For the classical version of the myth see *Il.* XX 233–235 (if these lines are not interpolated; M. W. Edwards, *Iliad V*, *ad loc.* seems to take them as genuine); cf. the Homeric *Hymn to Aphrodite*, ll. 202–217. Elsewhere in the *Iliad,* Hebe, with her juvenile beauty, serves the gods (*Il.* IV 2–3). Hephaestus' parody would go as well with her position on Olympus—except that the scene would lose its homoerotic undertones.

In a memorable scene in the *Iliad* (I 584–604), Hephaestus is serving the gods by pouring nectar as he hobbles among them.[142] At this sight, the 'inextinguishable laughter' of the gods breaks out (599–600). It is clear enough, besides the god's physical disability, what makes them laugh. He does not fit into the role, which, as we may infer, is reserved for the young and charming Ganymede.[143] The tension between Ganymede and his polar opposite, so to say, is what fuels the amusement of this scene.[144] Similarly, when the beggar-Odysseus finally realizes his plan to attend the banquets of the Suitors (*Od.* XVII 365–368), old and ugly as he is, he parodies a young cup-bearer skilfully enough to deserve the narrator's remark that he does it 'as if for a long time he had been a beggar' (366: *ὡς εἰ πτωχὸς πάλαι εἴη*). Now, both the aforementioned 'parodies' imply that the crucial thing about the real cup-bearers is their juvenile beauty. And both in the case of Ganymede and in that of the *neoi* attending the Suitors, it so happens that the sexual allure in question is homoerotic. In a convivial context, the 'works of Aphrodite' in the times of Homer would include homosexual desire as well,[145] although immoral maidens in the house of Odysseus would also point to heterosexual eroticism.

* * *

Behind the curtain of the normative heroic convention and in diverse poetic registers, we have thus far seen in Homer intimate (and conceivably egalitarian) circles enjoying wine drinking, regular nocturnal banqueting (and conceivably a competitive ethos between feasters), wine and ceremonial wine drinking as status symbols of the élite, some wine connoisseurship and sophisticated convivial luxury, as well as erotic (especially homoerotic) pleasure-oriented drinking events. Interestingly, the poet(s) imply that these phenomena are well-known to the public both in the *Iliad* and in the *Odyssey*. Although, as might a priori be expected, given the respective natures of both poems, we see much more of this in the latter.

[144] Cf. Fehr (1990) 187.

[145] There was already a heated debate regarding the presence of homosexuality in Homer in Antiquity. For recent discussion see Clarke (1978); Cantarella (1991) 23–28; and Davidson (2007) 255–260, 278–284, and 298–299 (see also ibid., pp. 178–179, 185–187, on Ganymede).

[146] Cf. sch^{bT} and sch^{D} *Il.* I 470. The most plausible exegesis of the formulaic image is either that of a meniscus crowning the vessel, filled to the rim, or of foam-bubbles on the surface of the liquid when freshly poured into the krater. Incidentally, I wonder

4.3.3 The Backstage Symposion in Homer

Wine drinking and wine-preparation must have been surrounded by sophisticated ceremony long before Homer. Already in antiquity, the formulaic line,[146] variously explained, (lit.) 'the boys crowned the kraters with wine' (*κοῦροι μὲν κρητῆρας ἐπεστέψαντο ποτοῖο*: *Il.* I 470; IX 175; *Od.* {I 148}; III 339; XXI 271), could have sounded archaic and somewhat obscure to Homer and his public. This is why I would not attach too much importance to the plural here. When we see it 'in action' in Homer, there is always one *krater* present in a dining hall.[147] Other details regarding wine drinking habits are symptomatically absent from Homer. As already mentioned, pledging toasts is attested to only once among humans in the *Iliad* and in the very peculiar circumstances of the Achaean reconciliatory embassy to Achilles.[148] Even in those normative heroic banquets that feature wine more conspicuously than it is usually the case, we do not learn too much of how exactly the heroes drink. It seems that Homer consistently shows each of them holding his own cup, but exceptionally, when the poet focuses on some unusual vessel, we see a cup handed round and circulating between those banqueting.[149]

As I tried to argue in Chapter 2, one of the constitutive features of the symposion is the fact that virtually every sympotic activity was subordinated to wine and its manipulations. Songs, jokes, toasts, and sympotic games all circulated in the dining-room *epidexia* (or *endexia*), 'from left to right', precisely according to the rule of the circulation of wine, served *epidexia* to the participants. This principle assured the equality of the participants and regulated their competition. But there is nothing like this in the feasts of the Homeric heroes. As we may surmise, the order in which they are served their wine must somehow be hierarchical.[150] Significantly enough, the *epidexia* principle is observed in several non-heroic poetic registers of the poems.

In a passage that I have already addressed from the first book of the *Iliad* (I 595–604), Hephaestus, instead of Ganymede, serves the gods. He pours the nectar while hobbling amusingly 'to the right'

if the image behind this formula could not have been inspired by the custom of crowning wine *kraters* with ivy-wreaths, a well-known Dionysian symbol.

[147] See above, pp. 217–218.
[148] Cf. above, p. 209. For the *Odyssey*, see briefly below.
[149] See e.g. *Od.* III 41–64; *Od.* XIV 78; *Od.* XVIII 121 with ll. 151–153.
[150] See above, pp. 211–212.

(*ἐνδέξια . . . οἰνοχόει*). This is the only passage in Homer where we can observe someone pouring a drink in this manner. What we have here is nectar, not wine, and a god among the other gods, not a human cup-bearer among men. But as this custom is never depicted in Homer, we must assume here an extra-textual reference evident enough for the audience. In yet another scene of the *Odyssey* already touched upon, Odysseus first enters his own *megaron* disguised as a beggar, which the banqueting Suitors occupy (XVII 365–368): 'he went on his way, from left to right, so to beg from each man (*βῆ δ' ἴμεν αἰτήσων ἐνδέξια φῶτα ἕκαστον*), reaching his hand out always, as if for a long time he had been a beggar'. More than once in the *Odyssey*, as B. Fehr once observed, the 'beggar' Odysseus gives a prime example of the 'self-performance' of a sympotic entertainer who tries to amuse noble participants of the feast (Fehr 1990, 185–186). In our passage, he tries to win the sympathy of the Suitors by circulating in the dining-room. As already mentioned, comment by the narrator is quite revealing. He wonders at Odysseus' expertise. I suspect that Odysseus is deliberately and ingeniously parodying the normal sympotic circulation of a cup-bearer moving *endexia* in the hall, as Hephaestus (and, allegedly, Ganymede) do on Olympus.

We may go a step further with another scene of the *Odyssey*, where the bow competition begins (XXI 140–148). 'Now Antinoös the son of Eupeithes said to them: "Take your turns in order from left to right, my companions all, beginning from the place where wine is served out (*ὄρνυσθ' ἑξείης ἐπιδέξια πάντες ἑταῖροι, | ἀρξάμενοι τοῦ χώρου, ὅθεν τέ περ οἰνοχοεύει*)." So spoke Antinoös, and his word was pleasing to all of them. Leiodes was the first to arise: the son of Oinops, who was a diviner among them, and sat always in the corner beside the mixing bowl.' Not only does the scene contain an impersonal expression (*τοῦ χώρου, ὅθεν τέ περ οἰνοχοεύει*) that attests to the customary character of this manner of serving wine, which is never explicitly depicted in Homer,[151] but it also deliberately hints at this reality, which is curiously absent from the Homeric poems. As was the case in the classical symposion, we have a *krater* and its place within the hall determines the sympotic space. Most revealing is the fact that not only the serving of wine, but another activity, having nothing to do with wine drinking,

[151] This ritual order must have been naturally associated by Homer with wine. The only other occurrence of the term is *Il.* VII 184, where a herald circulates 'to the right' among the heroes who volunteered for a duel.

is organized exactly according to the rule of the circulation of wine—*epidexia*. Just as with songs, recitations of poetry, *logoi*, games, toasts, or jokes in the symposion, the bow of Odysseus circulates among the Suitors in the very same manner as the wine.

Of course, the bow competition in the house of Odysseus is a purely imaginary scene. But its circumstances could not sound entirely absurd to Homer's audience. We may then conclude that at least in the contemporary world of the poet the idea of subordinating other convivial entertainments to the rules of the distribution of wine was not unheard of. Moreover, the entertainment in question is a convivial competition, another phenomenon that never occurs in the normative feasts of Homeric heroes. And it so happens that it is a dexterity competition carried out under the influence of drink.[152]

At this point, it is crucial to note that the distribution of wine *epidexia* and beginning from a customary place (somehow close to the *krater*) precludes any possibility of distributing it according to hierarchical order. Not unimportantly, the first Suitor to try his luck in the bow competition is the one who 'used to sit in the farthest corner' of the *megaron*: Leiodes, one of the least important named members of the band of the Suitors (*Od.* XXI 144–146). This random order of their 'performances' seems to imply that egalitarian drinking and convivial games, subordinated to the rules of wine circulation, were an obvious issue in the times of Homer.

* * *

A meaningful element of the convivial ethos implied by the poet of the *Odyssey* seems to be related to the (hypothetically) competitive atmosphere of the banquets known to the public of Homer.[153] In a speech to Eumaios, the beggar-Odysseus enumerates diverse morally suspect acts that even a serious man (*polyphrōn*) would commit under the influence of wine (*Od.* XIV 463–466).[154] Contradicting heroic decorum, this is the way Odysseus justifies an overly bold tale he is about to tell. The exculpatory atmosphere of wine drinking and merrymaking where everyday moral rules do not necessarily apply is not what Homeric heroes would understand. However, a

[152] This is not to suggest that Homer already knew the sympotic game of *kottabos*, but the procedure of the game was probably analogous (i.e. *epidexia*). cf. above, p. 93.

[153] For the convivial ethos, close to the sympotic one, in the *Odyssey*, see already Slater (1990). In general, cf. also Pellizer (1983) and (1990).

[154] See also above, p. 210.

literary topos of the kind is well known from later sympotic poetry. At the other extreme, we find a curious argument used by Telemachus (instructed by his father) to get rid of the weapons embellishing the wall of the *megaron*. He persuades the Suitors that this would be for their own good, as it is conceivable they could hurt one another by fighting while intoxicated (*oinōthentes*).[155] Interestingly, Telemachus' argument is fully convincing for the Suitors, and both Odysseus and his son know it would be, although such things never occur in the normative heroic feasts.

True, in Homer we come across traces of the motif of the 'deadly feast', which must have belonged to a well-established epic tradition.[156] However, Homer's public seems aware of the dangers of all-male nocturnal wine drinking occasions and of the need to curb excess in every possible way. As we shall see shortly, convivial strife (*eris*) would be a natural corollary of the feasts of the Suitors.[157]

4.3.4 Banquets of the Suitors and the Symposion

The Suitors continuously dine in the house of the absent Odysseus for three long years (*Od*. XIII 377–378), wooing his wife and little by little 'wearing out' his property.[158] In a fundamental paper on this issue (Saïd 1979), Suzanne Saïd thoroughly elucidated the 'crimes' they commit. Most importantly, she has shown in detail how the deviation from the poetic norm of a well-ordered banquet becomes emblematic of their transgression of social and religious norms.[159] It would be useless to repeat, let alone rework, these thoughtful analyses here. In

[155] XVI 291–294 (∼ XIX 10–13); cf. XX 266–267. For the convivial *eris* among the Suitors, see below, p. 234.

[156] See above, p. 195 with n. 16. In general, cf. Lissarrague (1992).

[157] Here, cf. also above, pp. 169–170, for the 'public house' in *Od.* XX 264–265, where, according to Telemachus, noisy drinking in an aggressive atmosphere may conceivably take place.

[158] The (changing) calculations behind the Suitors' behaviour (as well as those of Penelope and of Telemachus) have recently been ingeniously elucidated in Scodel (2001).

[159] See esp. Saïd (1979) 13 and *passim*.

[160] See e.g. *Od.* I 133–134 (cf., exceptionally, 325–326 and 339–340); 365–371; IV 768 (= XVIII 399 ∼ XVII 360). The verb *homadēsai* is only used of the Suitors in Homer. The noun *orymagdos* characterizing them in the *Odyssey* is never used of articulate human voices in the *Iliad.* Cf. *LSJ*[9] and *LfgrE*, *s.vv*.

[161] e.g. *Od.* I 227–229.

what follows, I shall only deal with some particularly striking details within this general picture.

Their degenerate etiquette when banqueting is 'crime' enough. They are the only humans in the poems who dine 'noisily'.[160] In general, they are also pictured as dining 'arrogantly' and 'shamefully',[161] which is a sign of their overarching *hybris*. The authorial audience of the *Odyssey* would then not be surprised to see them (again, the only people in Homer to do so) falling asleep during a feast, bursting with crazed laughter, or just abandoning themselves in frenzy.[162] In all this, Homer clearly suggests their drunkenness and for Telemachus as well as for the Suitors themselves the fact that they may fell victim to hubristic intoxication is a given.[163]

Under these circumstances, it becomes understandable that the Suitors are the only ones in Homer to banquet after sunset in a natural way, with no special occasion or circumstances required for justification. What is more, their servants are perfectly prepared for this to happen.[164] As we have seen above, the only unambiguous hints at possible erotic undertones of a banquet come from the feasts of the Suitors as well, and they also raise erotic subjects when dining,[165] which seems truly scandalous for heroic decorum.

All the adduced situations and behaviours are of course at home in the symposion. I think it would be fair to conclude that Homer's negative image of the Suitors and their banquets owes much to his public's acquaintance with symposia. The picture is simply too consistent with the sympotic habits, including regular nocturnal feasting, to be a coincidence. But there is more to it. Let me briefly mention

[162] See, respectively, *Od*. II 395–398 (cf. IX 371–374, of the sleeping Polyphemos); XX 345–349; and XVIII 406–407 (*mainomai*, again, a very strong word; in the *Odyssey*, only Polyphemos deserves it in IX 350). On *mainomai* and *mania* in Homer, see below, pp. 243–244. For one more analogy between the Suitors and the Cyclops in a convivial context, see below, p. 229.

[163] *Od*. XVI 291–294 (∼ XIX 10–13), for which see briefly above, pp. 224–225 with n. 155.

[164] See *Od*. XVIII 305–306 (and further, until l. 311). At least once more, partly using the same formulaic lines, Homer suggests that the Suitors enjoy their feast too long, until the 'dark sunset', but then go to bed (*Od*. I 422). In general, for nocturnal feasting in Homer, see above.

[165] *Od*. I 365 and XVIII 212–13, speaking noisily of Penelope. Furthermore, as R. Scodel aptly observes, despite Penelope's requests for specific gifts from the Suitors (XVIII 278–279), they offer her only erotically charged presents (Scodel 2001, 321).

[166] For *Od*. XI 185–187, cf. above, pp. 201–202, and see more below, p. 312. For the problem with the Homeric use of the term *eranos*, see above, p. 197 n. 22.

two intriguing peculiarities of the social dynamics of their feasts and then move to the banqueting pastimes they enjoy.

The issue of reciprocal dining in Homer will briefly be dealt with later. Here, I would simply like to point out that the only unambiguous situation of this kind in the *Odyssey* concerns the Suitors.[166] In a famous passage in Book One (374–380), repeated in Book Two (139–145), Telemachus urges the Suitors to leave his father's house and 'hold other feasts, eating up your own property, taking turns from one house to another (*ἀμειβόμενοι κατὰ οἴκους*)'. Notwithstanding the undeniable differences between the political power and wealth of individual Suitors, the conviviality envisioned for them by the enraged Telemachus is reciprocal and 'interchangeable', as it were, and it also must be conspicuously luxurious as he says they should devour their own property (instead of his). What is more, these lines seem to imply a kind of activity that defines a person's lifestyle and determines his prestigious position in the community. The feasts of the Suitors held in the *megaron* of Odysseus' house are not *symposia* and the same would have been true of their banquets outside it. However, with this reference to a custom totally alien to the heroic norm and only exceptionally alluded to in Homer, we get as close as possible to the sympotic social realities and its ethos. I think that Homer drew on knowledge of the symposion to trigger this strong image in the minds of his audience.

We may briefly touch upon another interesting social aspect of the Suitors' feasts, namely the presence of their social inferiors, such as Odysseus disguised as a beggar. Fehr has already conclusively shown how close his behaviour and role during these banquets is to the self-humiliating performances of the *aklētoi* at symposia (Fehr 1990, 185–187).[167] It is noteworthy that one such performance, which the Suitors press on their 'uninvited ones', is a parody of aristocratic athletic contests—a boxing match between two beggars.[168] The laughing Suitors even award a prize to the winner of this contest (*Od.* XVIII 110–123).

[167] For *aklētoi*, at times associated with, or posing as, beggars, see above, esp. p. 62 with n. 157.

[168] *Od.* XVIII 26–49 and esp. 89–100, with Fehr (1990) 186. On Iros, see recently Steiner (2009) discussing earlier interpretations of this character.

[169] See e.g. *Od.* IV 17–19.

Perhaps the most striking thing about the banquets of the Suitors is their own activities and performances in the *Odyssey*. In the heroic world, the feast is naturally accompanied by the song of an *aoidos* and may be embellished by the performance of professional dancers.[169] Although the poet is exhaustive concerning the attendants of the feasts of the Suitors, we never hear of dancers or acrobats (*kybistētēres*) in the house of Odysseus. So when we witness the Suitors 'betake themselves to the enjoyments of dance and of pleasurable song', we may be tempted to conclude that they dance themselves. They are so involved in 'dance and song' that they lose control of the time they spend on at least three occasions.[170] We never see diners dancing in a heroic context (the happy Phaeacians are obviously a case apart).[171] And, although the words are intentionally derogatory, we learn from an off-hand remark in the *Iliad* (XVI 617) that an Achaean aristocrat may conceivably be a good dancer.[172] After all, the so-called 'Dipylon Jug' from Athens attests to convivial (?) dancing competitions of Greek élites in the second half of the eighth century.[173] At any rate, the Odyssean passages in question are ambiguous and we cannot be entirely sure that the Suitors actually dance during their feast, although this seems plausible enough.

The normative heroic feasts feature songs executed by an *aoidos*. Otherwise, a noble diner can also provide his or her fellow-feasters (as Odysseus, Nestor, Menelaos, and Helen do) with a tale comparable and functionally replacing the *aoidē* of a singer.[174] In addition, the diners exchange courtly remarks and speeches appropriate to heroic etiquette. But not the Suitors. They define the enjoyments of their feasts for an outsider in a very peculiar manner (*Od.* XXI 289–292). They say that the intoxicated beggar (Odysseus) is

[170] Cf. I 421–423; XVII 605–606; XVIII 305–306. This is less plausible in the normative line I 152.

[171] Cf. *Od.* VIII 250–253. Cf. also *Il.* XVIII 494, on dancing 'youngsters' in a rustic context, with 603–606 (both passages, symptomatically, on the Shield of Achilles). When Priam deplores his brave sons now dead, he contrasts them to what is left, 'the cheaters and dancers' (*Il.* XXIV 261, with *Iliad VI*, comm. *ad loc.*). And the Trojans, just as the Phaeacians, can be associated with dancing, as for instance (mockingly) in *Il.* XVI 745–750. It looks like dancing is not an activity heroic enough to characterize openly the Achaean heroes and the truly heroic Trojans.

[172] Leaf II, *ad loc.*, p. 199, suggests here an allusion to the Cretan origin of Meriones.

[173] *IG* I^2 919 (= *SEG* XXXIX 41[a] = *CEG I* 432); cf. *LSAG*^{2} pp. 15–16, 68, 76.

[174] See above, p. 211 with n. 100.

ungrateful, although he is not only allowed to participate in their banquets, but also to listen to their 'conversations and speeches' (ἀκούεις | μύθων ἡμετέρων καὶ ῥήσιος). Rather boastfully, the focus switches from the conventional 'embellishments of the feast' to their own utterances. And rightly so, as we shall see in a while, for their speeches and remarks are truly intriguing.

During their banquets in the house of Odysseus, the behaviour of the Suitors is, if nothing else, appalling: they mock Telemachus, tease his mother, and at times even harass or physically abuse representatives of the group protected by Zeus Xenios, the mendicant-Odysseus and the foreign seer Theoclymenus. Of course, all this secures the rightful nature of their imminent disaster. For the present argument, it seems worthwhile to observe that, much more often than physically, they insult their victims verbally. They exchange rather brief remarks, usually offensive, and not at all intended to foster the peaceful revelry of an ideal heroic banquet.[175] Furthermore, at times, when insulting outsiders such as the disguised Odysseus, Theoclymenus, or even Telemachus, the Suitors seem to compete among themselves. And sometimes, we must admit, their verbal offences are not without perverse wit.

When Theoclymenus, prophesying their impending death, sees a dark shadow cast on their heads (*Od.* XX 356–357), Eurymachos catches his last words to suggest that there is darkness in the head of the seer and he should be chased out of the *megaron* and brought to the *agorē*, where he could check if it is also night there (l. 362: ἐπεὶ τάδε νυκτὶ ἐΐσκει).[176] This exchange is resumed by another suitor who begins with a neat verbal pun[177] and then goes on mockingly to advise Telemachus to do a horrible thing: he should sell his guests (τοὺς ξείνους, i.e. the beggar-Odysseus and Theoclymenus) abroad.[178] This is a brutal joke based on the theme of ritual hospitality, similar to that of the Cyclops Polyphemos promising Odysseus, as a token of his hospitality, that he 'will eat Nobody after his friends, and the others

[175] Cf., e.g., *Od.* IV 238–239 and 594–598.

[176] Eurymachus perhaps also insinuates the source of Theoclymenus' madness, namely the abuse of wine.

[177] Telemachus is the 'most unfortunate in guests', *kakoxeinōteros* (l. 376). The compound is built on the model of *kakodaimōn*, but also on that of *philoxeinos*.

[178] For the whole scene, see *Od.* XX 351–383.

[179] *Od.* IX 369–370. For other analogies between the behaviour of the Suitors and that of Polyphemos, see above, n. 162.

[he] will eat first, and that shall be [his] guest present to [Odysseus]'.[179] Another variation on the same theme can be found in the words of another suitor, Ktesippos of Same, who proposes to assign, as is proper, an 'equal share' of the banquet to the beggar-Odysseus (*μοῖραν . . . ἴσην*), adding his own guest gift (*xeinion*) to it, so that the beggar can give it as an honourable share (*geras*) to . . . another ignoble figure among the servants of the house (*Od.* XX 292–302).[180] The gift of Ktesippos is an ox hoof he throws at Odysseus (ll. 299–303).

For the public of the *Odyssey*, this may amount to a skilful auto-parody of a famous scene in the court of the Phaeacians, where Odysseus hands over a part of his *geras* to the bard Demodokos.[181] For Ktesippos himself, it is rather a joke consisting of an ironic reversal when applying the notions of aristocratic hospitality and gift-exchange to a miserable beggar. Overall, in Book XX we have a whole chain of competing *concetti* referring to this theme and thus alluding to a fundamental element of aristocratic etiquette and aristocratic values. The same is true of another act of physical abuse directed at the beggar, in Book XVII by Antinoos, who throws a stool at him, after mockingly promising Odysseus a gift due to beggars.[182] It would be fair to say, I think, that in all this the Suitors parody the very convention that underlies the normative heroic banquets pictured elsewhere by Homer.

Perhaps the most ingenious and intriguing *concetto* of this kind can be found in Book XVIII of the *Odyssey*. Let me quote the whole speech of Eurymachos, who insults Odysseus and makes his fellow-suitors laugh (ll. 349–355; tr. R. Lattimore, modified): 'Hear me, all you suitors of the glorious queen, hear me while I speak out what the heart within my breast urges. It is not without a divine intervention (*οὐκ ἀθεεί*) that this man comes to the house of Odysseus. It seems to me that his head is gleaming stronger than our torches. For his head has no hair, not even a little'. Once again, the reader of the *Odyssey* will no doubt link this passage with a well-known scene of Book VI, where Nausicaa, stupefied by the supernatural change in Odysseus, now 'shining of beauty and graces' (237: *κάλλεϊ καὶ χάρισι στίλβων*),[183] says to her maids (239–243; tr. R. Lattimore): 'Hear me, my white-armed serving women; let me say something. It is not against the will of all the gods (*οὐ πάντων ἀέκητι*

[180] *Od.* XX 292–302. [181] For this scene, see above, pp. 212–213.
[182] *Od.* XVII 406–410 with 462–463.
[183] Cf. e.g. *Od.* IV 26–29; VI 239–243; 280–281; VII 199–206; 208–210. In general, Cf. Bierl (2004).

θεῶν) on Olympus that this man is here to be made known to the godlike Phaeacians. A while ago he seemed an unpromising man to me. Now he even resembles one of the gods, who hold high heaven'.

The close parallels between both passages do not require further comment. But Eurymachos is parodying something more than an earlier scene of the *Odyssey*. He is targeting a widespread image that a divinely protected guest of a shining appearance may be a god disguised as a human.[184] After all, this is how Nausicaa felt in the scene adduced above. Here, in Eurymachos' speech, an ugly beggar, allusively compared to a godlike creature 'shining of beauty and graces', proves all the more repellent at the end.

The formal aspect of the series of jokes that precede the acts of physical abuse of Odysseus is particularly interesting. Eurymachos, an anonymous Suitor, Ktesippos, and Antinoos all employ paradoxical jokes and the last two provide a sudden twist with their ultimate brutal gesture that unexpectedly changes the meaning of what they have been saying at the beginning. The case of Eurymachos jibing at Odysseus' bald-headedness is of special relevance. Let me summarize the line of his argument (*Od.* XVIII 349–355). It seems, he says, that our guest does not come to our banquet without divine intervention. That is clear from the fact that his head is gleaming so intensely as if he were a god in disguise. Or is it rather his entirely hairless head that shines so brightly reflecting the flames of our torches?

This is an excellent example of the *aprosdokēton*, or 'the unexpected', wherein it becomes clear at the end of a literary unit that the opening statement means the opposite of what it says. As Johan Huizinga has shown long ago (within the frame of his 'study of the play element in culture'),[185] such literary forms are very appropriate in many cultures for agonistic utterances during a banquet. In the Greek context, however, we can easily point to a much closer parallel,

[184] See in particular *Od.* XVII 481–487. Cf. Grottanelli (1976/1977) and (1981) esp. 128–131 and important remarks by Rutherford (1986) esp. 159–162 ('. . . and if Odysseus is like a god in his testing of men's behaviour, he is also like one in the punishment that he exacts, which, like many actions of the gods, is both just and terrible'; ibid., p. 159).

[185] Huizinga (1970) [1938], esp. Chaps. III, VII, VIII, IX. Cf. also the evidence compiled by Thompson (1955–1958) vol. III: H500–H899 ('Tests of cleverness'; 'Tests in guessing'; 'Riddles') and Thompson (1955–1958) vol. IV: J1250–1499 ('Clever verbal retorts (repartee)').

[186] See above, Section 3.1.1.

thinking of the epigram on the eighth century 'Cup of Nestor', analysed in my previous chapter.

In the utterances of the Suitors, I think we can find good analogies to some of the aspects of this inscription that gave rise to its sympotic interpretation by Murray and others.[186] First of all, our Odyssean examples do 'make use of antithesis and the unexpected in a spirit of light-hearted rivalry' (Murray 1994, 51). No doubt, these utterances 'reveal that poetry is already at home in the drinking group, poetry, not performed by professionals as in Homer, but created by the members of the group' (ibid.). And in general, some verbal performances of the Suitors belong to the 'meta-sympotic discourse' that characterizes the sympotic literature from the 'Cup of Nestor' onwards. Moreover, the very existence of these utterances in the *Odyssey*, implies a deliberate contrast between them and the normative heroic feast, which exhibits 'that normative tendency and that [sympotic] self-consciousness which is so common later in sympotic verse, both serious and playful' (Murray 1994, 50). All in all, I would venture to say that some of the utterances of the Suitors—both in their form and content—might be interpreted, alongside the epigram on the 'Cup of Nestor', as the earliest extant examples of Greek *carmina convivalia*.[187] This implies an awareness of such literary conventions and forms of entertainment among Homer's audience.

It is also noteworthy that all these remarks and speeches by the Suitors are not only aggressive—they are competitive. At times, their victims strike back and respond to the Suitors in the same vein.[188] Odysseus and his son have their ultimate revenge when slaughtering the Suitors, but interestingly they also use this occasion to verbally respond to the attacks they suffered during the feasts. Thus, Ktesippos is mockingly addressed as 'fond of jeering' (*philokertomos*) by their ally Philoitios, who strikes a blow at him as a 'hospitality gift'

[187] In a similar vein Ford (1999) (on Odysseus opening speech in Book Nine of the *Odyssey*); Steiner (2009) esp. 90–96 (referring to the Homeric depiction of the boxing duel between Odysseus and Iros), on 'an intriguing coincidence between the Homeric and iambic texts' (p. 91); see also Pellicia (2002) esp. 217–221 (for Glaucus' comparison 'of lives and leaves' in *Il.* VI 145–149 as a typically sympotic utterance, competitive and urbane at the same time). For the entire *Odyssey* as a sympotic poem conceived to be performed during a series of symposia, see recently Murray (2008). Cf., however, below, pp. 239–240.

[188] Cf. *Od.* XVIII 366–386. Odysseus clearly wins this verbal exchange, so Eurymachos can only try to attack him physically (387–397).

(*xeinēion*) in exchange for the ox hoof the latter threw at Odysseus (*Od.* XXII 287–291). But the most perverse is the witty convivial joke made by Odysseus at the outset of the massacre, when commenting on his successful shot during the archery competition and announcing at the same time the slaughter of his enemies (*Od.* XXI 428–430; tr. S. Butler): 'But now it is time that supper too be made ready for the Achaeans, while yet there is light (*νῦν δ' ὥρη καὶ δόρπον Ἀχαιοῖσιν τετυκέσθαι | ἐν φάει*), and thereafter must yet other sport be made with song and with the lyre (*καὶ ἄλλως ἐψιάασθαι | μολπῇ καὶ φόρμιγγι*); for these things are the accompaniments of a feast'.[189] Odysseus sardonically hints at some ideals of the heroic feast,[190] thus joining in, and capping, the 'meta-banqueting discourse' that was triggered earlier and conducted at his expense by the Suitors. Immediately after having beaten them in a convivial competition of dexterity (the archery contest) and just before finally killing them, Odysseus also wins in a competition of offensive utterances.

We repeatedly hear of the Suitors' inveighing against, and provoking, Telemachus or his guests throughout their banquets.[191] Time and again they burst into laughter, and physically or, more often, verbally abuse an outsider. Indeed, they do this so eagerly that it appears to be their favourite convivial pastime. If we remind ourselves of the formal sophistication of their aggressive utterances, the analogy with a later sympotic entertainment, namely with the provocative 'jibes' (*skōmmata*) mockingly targeting fellow-drinkers, seems inescapable.[192] As we remember, the norms of a good symposion required the diners to

[189] Cf. *Od.* XXI 405–409, for the comparison between Odysseus the archer and a skilful lyre-player or a singer.

[190] He will provide the Suitors with a 'late meal' when there is still light, for ideally it is time to go to bed at sunset. The embellishments of a banquet are the *phorminx*, which now becomes his deadly bow, and the 'song' that will now consist of the unison laments of his victims. Instead of listening to an *aoidos* singing of bloody fights and deaths of heroes, they will now experience it all themselves, served in cold blood by a stranger to their feasts who now proves to be their missing host.

[191] See *Od.* II 323; XVI 86–87; XVIII 346–347; 349–350; XX 169–171; 176–177 (here of Melanthios); 263–264; 284–286; 373–374; XXIV 326.

[192] Cf. already Slater (1990) 217. Cf. also Steiner (2009) 91, who takes into account the possibility of the existence in the *Odyssey* of 'a certain type of poetic performance, in which competing entertainers exchange abusive remarks or, more plausibly, a poet narrates his and/or another's participation in such an event within a sympotic setting'.

[193] For *skōmmata*, see above, pp. 50–51.

[194] So when Ktessippos is referred to as *philokertomos*, 'fond of jeering' (*Od.* XXII 287), I would be tempted to take it as an equivalent of the later *philoskōmmōn*, 'fond of scoffing or jesting' (see e.g. Hdt. II 174, 1, of the Egyptian king Amasis).

mock one another so as to provoke laughter without really hurting anyone.[193] But during a bout of heavy drinking, an innocent provocation is always just one step away from a deadly offence. Our interpretation of the *Odyssey* shows that Homer and his contemporary public already knew this potentially disruptive ambiguity inherent in the aristocratic banquet.[194]

I have already adduced a passage containing Odysseus' rather sympathetic description of the effects that alcohol has on men (*Od.* XIV 46–466). Against such a background, the most important idiosyncrasy of the feasts of the Suitors is that they are dominated by *hybris* and in constant danger of *eris*. In *Od.* XX 266–267, Telemachus urges the Suitors to 'tame their angry threats (*enipē*) and their hands not to stir up strife (*eris*) and quarrel (*neikos*)' during a feast. As we remember, Telemachus gets rid of the arms and armour on display in the *megaron* in preparing for the massacre. He easily persuades the Suitors that they are in danger of mutual *eris* when drunk.[195] Nothing like this ever happens in the *Odyssey*, but the mere possibility envisaged by the Suitors themselves looks like the ultimate consequence of the competitive atmosphere of their banquets that goes beyond provoking Telemachus and abusing strangers.[196] What is more, some of them voice warnings applicable to their own convivial situation, either openly or in vivid parables.[197] Ironically, Homer conveys his moralistic 'meta-sympotic' discourse in part through the mouths of the Suitors themselves.

[195] *Od.* XVI 291–294 (∼ XIX 10–13).

[196] On the competitive logic of the mutual relations among the Suitors, see Scodel (2001).

[197] See, respectively, *Od.* XVIII 403–404, for the warning (by an anonymous Suitor) 'lest the good feast lose its charm when the worse one triumphs, now that we quarrel about a beggar', and *Od.* XXI 295–304, for the tale of the drunken Centaur Eurytion and the Centauromachy (told by Antinoos). The latter story pertains of course to the danger of the conflicts between former friends and fellow-drinkers. More on this issue below, pp. 243–244.

4.4 CONCLUSIONS: HOMER, SYMPOSION, AND HISTORY

4.4.1 *Dais*, *Geras*, and the *Polis*—On the Historicity of the 'Heroic Feast'

Thus far, my sceptical attitude toward the poetic image of the 'heroic feast' in Homer made it possible for us to discover, behind the veil of the heroic convention, another type of feasting well-known to the poet(s) and their contemporary publics, the symposion. However, it would be premature to discard the 'Homeric feasts' as altogether and by definition non-historical.[198]

One important factor lending some historical plausibility to the poetic image of heroic feasting is the Homeric notion of *geras*, the 'part of honour', and its key-role in the Homeric *dais*. The workings of the *geras* are not only highly consistent throughout the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, but also in other early literary sources such as Hesiod's *Theogony*.[199] This being the case, we need to take a closer look at the social aspect of the heroic feast in Homer. In the following, I will begin by checking its social plausibility by applying to it the typology elaborated by M. Dietler and B. Hayden (Grignon's theory, rooted in twentieth-century French social phenomena is misplaced for Homeric royal banquets).

The feasts in Agamemnon's tent in the *Iliad* fit in well with the category of the 'empowering feast', which permits the host to secure requisite 'social capital' and necessary (military) support in the society of more or less equal Homeric *basilēes*, 'kings'. Of course, one cannot be sure that this peculiar adaptation of the epic motif of the 'royal feast'—although conceivable in the (hypothetical) socio-political constellation of the later Dark Ages—was not utterly determined by the requirements of the plot of the *Iliad*, where the unclear bonds of the shaky superiority of Agamemnon over the other Achaean 'kings' are one of the crucial 'trigger mechanisms' of the poem's action. In the *Odyssey*, on the other hand, the 'royal feasts' held in peacetime, in communities where the king's authority is

[198] I partly withdraw here from my earlier and more radical views in Wecowski (2011*a*) and Wecowski (forthcoming *a*), both written several years ago.

[199] For Hesiod, see e.g. Wecowski (2012) 54, with the bibliography adduced.

unquestionable, are better described as 'patron-role feasts'. The social dynamics of such venues correspond to a higher level of social stratification, featuring more stable hierarchical relations, where the host is supposed to have access, or even monopoly on the access, to important consumption goods (a massive amount of meat and wine in this case) perceived in quantitative and not qualitative terms. The style of consumption is not of crucial importance here. The convivial 'passive' entertainments—listening to an *aoidos* and not performances by the diners—fit in well with this 'modality' of feasting.

In light of Dietler's theory, we can see that the heroic 'royal feast' does not present a consistent picture and therefore cannot be identified with one 'modality' of 'commensal politics'. All depends on the social position and political strength, as it were, of the local leader. In general, the problem of the nature of Homer's *basilēes* is one of the most debatable aspects of the 'Homeric world', particularly since Sir Moses Finley introduced ethnographic and sociological comparative considerations to the study of the 'world of Odysseus' (Finley 1988 [1954]). In the briefest terms possible: Are Homeric kings hereditary 'chiefs' or simply unstable charismatic leaders similar to the Melanesian *big men*, required to confirm their leadership on an everyday basis?[200]

For my present purposes, there is something more at stake. Homer's consistency with respect to the poetic picture of the 'heroic feast', as well as the match between the workings of the Homeric *geras* and abundant extra-textual data, might in principle prove the historicity of this social situation. But the issue looks entirely different when we focus on the more general socio-political framework of the 'Homeric world' and observe the role of the *dais* in the wider context of the plot in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. The situation is rather disconcerting. It appears that only the king of a given community had the right to organize feasts, although here and there—in non-heroic 'poetic registers'—we hear of feasts to which the king (or his son) was invited by other prominent members of the community and of the 'reciprocal feasting' of élites in general.[201]

[200] See in particular Van Wees (1992) esp. 281–294; in our context, cf. Van Wees (1995) esp. 175–176. For the distinction between *big men* and 'chiefs' see the classical essay by Sahlins (1963).

[201] Cf. also below, pp. 311–315.

In connection with this point, it is worthwhile to indicate yet another paradox of the picture of the 'heroic feast' within the framework of 'Homeric society'. We read in the *Iliad* about the 'meat and the cups always full of wine' given to the leaders of the Achaeans and of the Lycians by their peoples (e.g. VIII 161–162; XII 310–312). But in the Achaean camp the line between such communal effort (and communal honour) and the same honour apportioned by the king (*Il.* VII 321–322) is missing. This being the case, the mention of the 'chiefs and leaders' of the Achaeans 'drinking at the public cost' (δήμια πίνουσιν) together with their king and his brother (*Il.* XVII 248–250) becomes perplexing. In a few passages in the *Odyssey*, we hear of a similar practice. Alkinoos reassures the leaders of the Phaeacians, who give abundant guest-gifts to Odysseus, that they will be able to 'take them back from the people, for it is too difficult for one man to cover the costs of such precious gifts' (*Od.* XIII 15–16). The character of the gifts (a bronze tripod and a bronze cauldron [*lebēs*] for each of the Phaeacian 'elders') makes it clear that they will be given some form of material compensation by the *dēmos*. And this is hardly imaginable in social practice as well as in the system of values underpinning the procedures of élite gift-exchange.[202] We find a similarly pragmatic solution again in the *Odyssey*, when the fictitious Cretan hero Aithon, purportedly descendant of Minos, 'gathers among the people' (δημόθεν . . . ἀγείρας) flour, wine, and oxen for the feast he is about to organize to honour Odysseus and his crew (*Od.* XIX 196–198).

I have the impression that both adduced passages of the *Odyssey* bespeak a crucial tension—within the 'heroic world' of the poems—between, on the one hand, the ideal of ostentatious gift-exchange and that of lavish élite hospitality and, on the other, practical considerations of the limited economic strength of the participants of such an incessant 'heroic' exchange. The same holds true of the notion of 'drinking at the public expense' by the Achaean 'elders' at Troy (*Il.* XVII 248–250), contrasting with numerous passages in the *Iliad* where Agamemnon is unambiguously pictured as the sole host and patron of such feasts during the decade-long war. In the last case, I believe we can recognize the most important reason for this 'cost allocation' of the heroic *dais*. The Argives drink at the public expense

[202] Comm. *ad loc.* by A. Hoekstra (*Odyssey II*, p. 163) is of little help here as it simply refers the reader to Finley (1988) [1954].

because 'each of them commands his people and they are followed by the esteem and by the glory apportioned to them by Zeus' (*Il.* XVII 249–250: . . . *ἐκ δὲ Διὸς τιμὴ καὶ κῦδος ὀπηδεῖ*). Such is also the case of the Lycian Sarpedon and Glaucus, distinguished among their people by the best seats at feasts, special portions of wine and of meat, and additionally by great and fertile plots of land back in their fatherland (*Il.* XII 310–321). Because of their prowess in war they are worshipped and regarded as if they were gods (321: *πάντες δὲ θεοὺς ὥς εἰσορόωσι*).

For Moses Finley and many scholars after him, the episodes adduced above provided evidence for the special socio-political position of the leaders and warlords in the 'world of Odysseus' or in the contemporary world of the poet(s). In exchange for such honours, the 'kings' offered their priceless martial skills and their leadership to the community.[203] This aspect of the 'Homeric world' also substantiates Murray's claim that the symposion evolved on the basis of earlier military feasts of specialized groups of warriors—feasts organized at the public expense at some stage in the Dark Ages.[204]

I must admit I take these interpretations as additional examples of much too literal readings of the 'Homeric world' and exaggerated quests for its ever-elusive coherence. Let us observe that in both passages of the *Iliad* cited above the narrator emphasizes that the privilege of dining at the public expense is either given by Zeus (XVII 250) or brings the heroes closer to a superhuman position (XII 321). In my view, both episodes unambiguously suggest that what we face here is a socio-political ideal cherished by the poet(s), rather than the social realities of the time. In other words, this is how the socio-political stature of the god-like kings, constantly worshipped by the *dēmos* by lavish feasting, ought to look.

Meanwhile, one must not forget about the well-rooted conceptualization in the Homeric poems of a contrast between the 'affairs of the people' (*dēmia*) and private or family business (*idia*). This opposition

[203] See esp. Finley (1988) [1954], 96–97 and Van Wees (1995) 165–167.

[204] See Murray (1982*a*); (1983*b*) 197–198; (1983*c*) 261–262; Murray (1995) [1993], 222–223. Cf. also above, pp. 3–4.

[205] *Od.* II 21–32; 42–46; cf. *Od.* III 82 (*πρῆξις δ' ἥδ' ἰδίη, οὐ δήμιος, ἣν ἀγορεύω*) and *Od.* IV 312–314 (*τίπτε δέ σε χρειὼ δεῦρ' ἤγαγε . . . δήμιον ἦ ἴδιον;*). What makes Telemachus the object of such unheroically anachronistic considerations is his notoriously ambiguous socio-political standing in the plot of the poem. All other important heroes are unquestioned kings (and adults).

automatically comes to the fore when a character in the plot faces someone who is about to attempt some serious deed—in the formal public setting of the citizens assembly (*agorē*) or when visiting a friend in private. What is more, in all such cases in the *Odyssey*, it concerns one and the same hero who is expected to unveil his true intentions. A royal son, Telemachus is time and again asked whether he acts on private account or for the public good.[205] This being the case, I think we have to conclude that the ideal situation sketched in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, featuring powerful and god-like kings regularly dining at the public cost, did not belong to the socio-political reality of the time. If historically reliable, information about this convivial institution must have reached the poet(s) from the stock of epic tradition, shaped in this respect by an earlier stage of the development of the Greek ideas of community, pre-dating the world view reflected by the adduced passages of the *Odyssey* regarding Telemachus.

* * *

To put it briefly, the inner logic of the 'Homeric feast' seems historically plausible enough (which of course does not conclusively prove its historicity), whereas the role of the *dais* in the framework of the socio-political relations in the poems seems to belong to a poetic ideal. This ideal could have had, but not necessarily, its roots in some earlier stage of the Dark Ages. For me, the most important conclusion is that potential historical models of the 'heroic feast' sharply contrast with the symposion as it emerges 'backstage' in Homer.

4.4.2 Dionysus and the Poet, or Homer Reflecting on the Symposion

Thus far, I could use terms such as 'Homer' in a conventional way, referring to the author or authors of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. At this juncture, before analyzing the import of the manner in which the symposion features in both poems, I must return to the vexed problem of their authorship. To this point, I have assumed they should be treated as more or less coherent intellectual projects and not as end

[206] Note, however, that in order to consider *Odyssey*, the poem for which the symposion proves crucially important, separately from the *Iliad*, Murray needs to discard as a later addition the Olympian scene in *Il.* I 595–604 (cf. already Wecowski 2002*b*, 629–630) that shows 'an awareness of the rituals of the *symposion*' (Murray 2008, 164–165, quotation on p. 165).

products of underlying oral traditions. But in the pages that follow, I will argue that we also might view the problem of the mutual relationship of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* from a convivial perspective.

In a highly stimulating paper published several years ago, Murray presented the author of the *Odyssey* 'as the first and the greatest of all sympotic performers' (Murray 2008, 173), suggesting that it is possible to envision the debut of this poem in a series of thirty-nine sympotic performances. I am not altogether persuaded by this interpretation, even less so by Murray's decision to sharply dissociate the *Odyssey* from the *Iliad* based on their postulated relationship with feasting (and in particular with convivial poetry). This may be true for what is depicted in the central action of the plot of both poems,[206] which is fully understandable given the respective themes of both. As we have seen earlier in this chapter, the symposion creeps into their non-heroic registers precisely when the poet(s) tries to refer the audience to extra-textual experience. And it is true that the *Odyssey* provides more of such material. The abhorrent feasts of the Suitors abound in sympotic references and associations introduced by the poet to emphasize not only the perversity of these banquets, but also their disastrous effects on Ithaca's social life. It should be stressed again that the feasts of the Suitors are not symposia as such, which could not have been accommodated in the archaizing literary and social conventions of the world of the heroes of old. Meanwhile, the fact that the poet uses the symposion to make it clear that the Suitors are repulsive to the gods requires our attention, as it may imply that he had some fundamental objections to this manner of feasting.

That having been said, the important differences between both poems, namely the more explicit attitude of the poet of the *Odyssey* towards the symposion, should not make us dissociate the two—since this feature may ultimately be due to the aforementioned divergences between their respective plots. Nor can any consistent treatment of the 'heroic feast' in both poems bespeak their common authorship, for this picture is simply conventional. Yet, the hypothesis of a rather close affinity of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* in time and in space, or of their common cultural and intellectual milieus, cannot be discarded

[207] My attitude to their intellectual and artistic affinities owes much, to limit myself to more recent scholarship, to Rutherford (2001); cf. also Rutherford (1986).

[208] London, British Museum, 1971.11–1.1: *Paralipomena*, 19.16bis (= The Beazley Archive, no. 350099). I deliberately restrict myself here to unambiguous images that

out of hand.[207] A close reading of the symposion and of the workings of wine in the *Iliad* and in the *Odyssey* in 'ideological' terms, in other words, decoding conceivable messages regarding the symposion in both poems, may bring to light some new evidence for a reassessment of this relationship, a task we shall undertake in what follows.

* * *

To understand the particularly discreet presence of the symposion in the Homeric poems, we should focus above all on the equally low-key manner in which the poet(s) represents Dionysus, the tutelary patron of wine, wine-drinking, and of the symposion in later periods. As Cornelia Isler-Kerényi rightly pointed out regarding the famous black-figured *dinos* of Sophilos of *c.*580–570 BC,[208] the fact that we do not have clearly identifiable representations of Dionysus predating this vessel does not speak to the history of Greek religion, but to that of Greek pottery and its artistic conventions (Isler-Kerényi 2007, 5–6 and 14–16). I assume that the same may be true of the way Dionysus figures in Homer.[209]

The equally discreet presence of this god in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* was once ascribed to the allegedly late arrival of Dionysus to Greece or to his presumed link with lower social strata, which would make him negligible to the aristocratic poet Homer.[210] Wilamowitz combined to some extent both attitudes,[211] whereas Giuseppe Aurelio Privitera argued that conventional considerations of the heroic genre made Homer exclude the god who could have already had his own 'Dionysian' epic tradition in earlier times (Privitera 1970, *passim*).

carry inscriptions identifying this divinity. Characters identifiable with Dionysus occur in vase-painting even earlier than that; see below, p. 287 n. 111, for the so-called 'Melian amphorae'.

[209] R. Schlesier (2011*c*) 210 observes that it is striking that Dionysus 'never appears as a part of the main narrative or as a participant of divine gatherings on Olympos'. Cf. also Davies (2000) 15–17. Based on the aforementioned assumption in this section, I cannot follow Fehr (2003), who argues for a relatively late 'Dionysos' patronage' of the symposion, dating this phenomenon to the time of the first pictorial representations of the god as a reclining symposiast (i.e. not before *c.*530 BC).

[210] For the latter interpretation see e.g. Deubner (1932) 122.

[211] Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (1931–1932) vol. II, 60–61. Cf. briefly Privitera (1970) 13 with n. 1.

[212] Cf. Seaford (1994) *passim*, esp. 328–344.

[213] Wathelet (1991) esp. 74; cf. also Schlesier (2011*b*) 177–178, 182–183. Cf. already Otto (1939) 51–56. Seaford (2006) 27, emphasizes the weakness of Dionysus in Homer (the frightened god flees from a human, who will only be punished by Zeus). In general, Cf. Dabdab Trabulsi (1990) 41–47.

According to Richard Seaford, the cult of Dionysus must have been older than the *polis*, but the god only progressively gained some prominence in the ritual system of the Greek city, hence, perhaps, the inconspicuous presence of this god in Homer.[212] Meanwhile, Paul Wathelet rightly observed that it is exactly the discreet presence of Dionysus that proves how important he must have been to the contemporary audience of both poems. As Wathelet shows well, Homer has recourse to rather subtle allusions to Dionysus's myths and perhaps rituals, too. He could afford being allusive, in that he assumed his public to be familiar with the god.[213]

Of course, when trying to understand the place of the symposion in the world-view of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, it is not enough to conclude the importance of Dionysus at the time. We should ask ourselves about the possible link of Dionysus with the symposion in the mind(s) of the author(s) of both poems. Incidentally, such a link at so early as date seems possible on extra-textual grounds, if we were to rely on two wine vases (a *krater* and an amphora) from the late eighth century, both carrying the inscription *ΘΕΟ* (i.e. *ΘΕΟΥ*), 'belonging to [the] divinity', with no further specification needed to identify this divinity for the reader.[214]

[214] For the *krater* from Pithekoussai (168–1, inv. no. 166781; last quarter of the eighth century BC) see below, pp. 253–254, with n. 15. For the amphora from Methone (*Mθ* 2238; late eighth or early seventh century) see its preliminary publication in *Methone Pierias I*, pp. 342–344. It should be noted, however, that in both cases the series of three letters are by some scholars interpreted as originally belonging to longer inscriptions and tentatively identified as fragments (or abbreviations) of names. In both cases, I would consider such readings doubtful.

[215] See e.g. Müller (1847–1848), vol. II, 28–30. The fact that a mythical wine-producer Maron (in other versions of the myth he was a son of Dionysus; cf. already [Hes.] [*Catalogue of Women*] fr. 238 Merkelbach-West) becomes a priest of Apollo in Homer might, 'according to some commentators' (Aristarchus?), suggest that the poet was reluctant to ascribe the discovery of wine to Dionysus (thus sch *Od.* IX 198). On Maron's wine see above, p. 217 with n. 123.

[216] The line 74—independently of the entire *Deuteronekyia*—was athetized already by Aristarchus. Recently, A. Heubeck (*Odyssey III*, pp. 356–358) opts hesitantly for ascribing the *Deuteronekyia* to the original form of the *Odyssey*.

[217] Otto (1939) 54. Cf. Privitera (1970) 43–44. Schlesier (2011*b*) 176 and n. 23 (p. 182), curiously opposes this interpretation as methodically unsound. Repeated in Schlesier (2011*c*) 201: 'Certainly, the most intriguing element of the Homeric Dionysos is the absence of his basic function as the wine-god, a silence that still remains to be elucidated'.

[218] Interestingly, in Pseudo-Hesiodic *Shield of Heracles*, l. 400, where this epithet is further developed, wine grapes as referred to as 'a joy and load of grief' (*χάρμα καὶ ἄχθος*) for humans.

Ever since Walter F. Otto, it has been difficult to question the original connection between the god and wine.[215] Even assuming a late origin for the *Deuteronekyia* in the *Odyssey*,[216] thus discarding the famous passage featuring 'the golden amphora, gift of Dionysus' to Thetis (XXIV 73–75: . . . *χρύσεον ἀμφιφορῆα· Διωνύσοιο δὲ δῶρον* . . .), we are left with other testimonies in both poems that cannot be disposed of based on diverse analytical considerations. In *Il.* XIV 325, Dionysus is referred to using the meaningful epithet 'the joy for the mortals' (*χάρμα βροτοῖσιν*). As W. F. Otto observed, this must have corresponded to the Hesiodic 'gifts of Dionysus that rejoice many' (*Op.* 614: *δῶρα Διωνύσου πολυγηθέος*; cf. *Th.* 941).[217] All this points to the god's tutelage over wine and, more importantly, over joyful wine-consumption.[218]

W. F. Otto also stressed the importance of 'Dionysian' madness in Homer.[219] In the longest episode featuring this god in the *Iliad* (VI 132), Dionysus is depicted as 'maddened' (*mainomenos*), whereas Andromache fearing the death of Hector runs through the streets of Troy 'like a Maenad' (*Il.* XXII 460: *μαινάδι ἴσῃ*; cf. VI 389: *μαινομένῃ ἐϊκυῖα*).[220] One cannot discard this evidence, as Wilamowitz wanted to do (Wilamowitz 1931–1932, vol. II, 60), by simply adducing her frenzied looks and actions, as the comparison alludes to the audience's extra-textual knowledge.[221] It is true that the notion of madness in Homer is usually connected with war and in particular with the god Ares, but there are two more passages in the *Odyssey* that deserve our attention in this context. In the most elaborate scene of both poems hinting at drunkenness, Antinoos the suitor cites the Centaur Eurytion from the Centauromachy. Wine has clouded his mind and he 'raged in the house of Peirithoos perpetrating evil deeds' (XXI 297–298: *μαινόμενος κάκ' ἔρεξε*). Within several lines of the episode, the suitor repeats several times that wine was responsible for the Centaur's actions and applies this example to the current behavior of Odysseus disguised as a mendicant.[222] We already know that the epic convention made it impossible for the poet to show to his public

[219] Otto (1939) 52–53. In general, Cf. Wathelet (1991). Recently, see Schlesier (2011*b*) 176–178 and 182–183, as well as Davies (2000) 16.

[220] Cf. also *h. Hom. Cer.* 386.

[221] Schlesier (2011*b*) 182–183, goes as far as to call the 'Maenadic' words in Homer 'technical terms'. Cf. also Schlesier (2011*c*) 211.

[222] *Od.* XXI 293–294, 295–296, 297, 304, 309–310.

[223] Cf. *Od.* XVIII 346–348.

[224] Cf. e.g. Anacreon, fr. 83 Page (*PMG* 428) and *Theogn.* 1231.

a drunkard in the central storyline of his poem, but in an intriguing passage of the *Odyssey* (XVIII 406–407), Telemachus addresses the suitors as those maddened (δαιμόνιοι, μαίνεσθε), whose minds are clouded by the abundance of food and drink (οὐκέτι κεύθετε θυμῷ | βρωτὺν οὐδὲ ποτῆτα) and who are 'stirred up by some divinity' (θεῶν νύ τις ὔμμ᾽ ὀροθύνει). The reader of this passage is advised by the narrator of the agency of Athena in all this,[223] but Telemachus is not aware of the goddess's role. I would venture to suggest that he most probably refers here to the god of wine who was widely believed to cast drunken madness (*mania*) on humans.

In the sympotic poetry of the archaic period we find erotic *mania* sent by Aphrodite (or by Eros),[224] but Dionysian *mania* is commonplace, as well.[225] Already in the *Odyssey* we can see the banqueters in a state of Dionysian frenzy (the Centaur Eurytion), whereas the *Iliad* knows Bacchic madness (Andromache). It is of paramount importance here that the Dionysian trance in the *Odyssey* has nothing to do with the joyful entrancement of later poetry—it is an utterly dangerous and ominous state of mind.

* * *

If my foregoing argument holds, we may posit that the decision to conceal the symposion within the 'heroic register' of both poems might have been closely related to the similar treatment of Dionysus in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. Before we ascribe this decision to some important intent by the poet(s), we should consider another possibility. The absence of the symposion from the mainstream of the plots and its presence as a corollary in the realm of 'non-traditional referentiality' implies that the poet(s) never encountered this institution or its related values in the traditional stock of epic poetry. But are we entitled to conclude the same for Dionysus? If so, the peculiar role of the symposion and its divine patron in Homer would simply result from an underlying epic norm and not from a deliberate authorial choice.

The aforementioned allusions to the fate and ritual of Dionysus as well as the poetic formulas depicting this god all suggest that he was no

[225] See e.g. *Theogn.* 313; Euenos, fr. 2 W^2 *passim*, esp. l. 2 (cf. perhaps fr. 5 W^2); *Carmina convivialia*, fr. 19 Page (*PMG* 902, with comm. *ad loc.* Fabbro (1995) 171–174, for more occurrences of this topos). See also an interesting fragmentary *graffito* (mid-sixth century BC) from the island of Berezan' in the Black Sea region (a fragment of a iambic verse?): '. . . to rage and to love . . .' ([—] μαίνεσθα[ι] καὶ ἐρᾶν [—]; see *Borysthenes–Berezan*, p. 141). In general, cf. also Catoni 2010, 242 with n. 35.

[226] See esp. Griffin (1977); cf. Griffin (1980) and (1986).

stranger in pre-Homeric epic traditions. In a series of studies, Jasper Griffin has brilliantly shown how much the Homeric poems differ from the extant fragments of the 'Epic Cycle'.[226] Griffin ascribes this uniqueness to the *Iliad*, where direct divine interventions, magical events, creatures, and objects, all essential to the world-view of the 'Cyclic' poets, are remarkably rare. I believe we may extend this interpretation to the *Odyssey* as well, once we realize that such 'Cyclic' characteristics occur in this poem mainly in Odysseus' first-person tales of painful wanderings. In the main development of the plot recounted by the narrator, the 'natural laws' of the epic world are essentially similar to those of the *Iliad* and very different from those of the 'Epic Cycle'. I would be tempted to take this as a sign of a subtle game by the poet with underlying epic convention. Most importantly, the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* share a deeply 'philosophical' world view, whose fundamental feature (responsible for the aforementioned characteristics) is a clear-cut and impenetrable divide between the world of the eternally happy gods and that of humans doomed to incessant suffering. Only once in the *Iliad* do we find a full-scale, nay monumental involvement and indeed engagement of gods in the human sphere, as they join in and fight against one another in the Trojan War. The gods will now directly support their human protégés, but on the other hand, exceptionally powerful humans may openly defy and fight gods. However, in this episode we receive a striking clue from the poet as he makes Zeus give his exceptional and only temporary consent at the outset of the battle to the gods eager to fight (*Il.* XX 23–30). I understand this as a sophisticated indication of deliberately abandoning the 'natural laws' otherwise with very few exceptions ruling the heroic world, as conceived by the poet of the *Iliad*.

Indeed, we find humans defying, fighting, and even persecuting and pursuing gods elsewhere in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, but—leaving aside very few exceptions to this rule—always in tales recounted by diverse

[227] On heroes such as Lykourgos, Bellerophon, Heracles, Peirithoos, Meleager, Eurytos, or Otos see Treu (1968) esp. 17–28. Katarzyna Wiśniewska (University of Warsaw) is preparing an interesting study on this issue. In my opinion their function is crucial to the poet(s) since such characters play, in relation to the heroes of the Homeric poems, the 'paradigmatic' role similar to the one the Homeric heroes play in relation to the audience of Homer. In other words, the feats and fates of Lykourgos and Bellerophon should be as instructive to Glaucus and Diomedes in Book Six of the *Iliad* as the message conveyed by the disastrous repercussions of wrath of Achilles to the public of the *Iliad*.

characters of the poems alluding to non-Homeric versions of various myths and referring to the previous generation of heroes.[227] One such case regards Dionysus himself, in a mysterious story told by Glaucus, featuring the 'mighty Lykourgos' pursuing the terrified juvenile Dionysus (*Il.* VI 130–140). If we combine this episode with the 'battle of gods' in the *Iliad*, executed with Zeus's explicit consent, I think we are entitled to conclude that direct entanglements between humans and gods belonged to the usual epic repertoire from which both poems wanted to distance themselves. In any case, the epic traditions underlying the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* knew Dionysus well and used this god without reservations. Therefore, it must have been the poet(s) deliberate choice to do otherwise.

One could not accommodate within the framework of the severe world of the Homeric heroes the god of wine-drinking and drunken madness, powerful and weak at the same time, the god whose distinctive feature was his constant entanglement with humans.[228] But there may be something more to be said about this decision. Given the manner in which Homer used the symposion to build his picture of the ominous feasts of the suitors in the *Odyssey*, I would be tempted to detect here one more case of moralizing 'meta-sympotic discourse' that we know so well from later periods.[229] The coherent project of the ideal banquet of the heroes of old, based on discarding and manipulating the symposion, may appear as one conceivable aspect of the moral thought of the time.

Of course, this did not necessarily mean disgust toward the pleasurable wine-drinking occasion as such, as the case of Kritias, equally eager to stigmatize and enjoy symposia, shows well.[230] I would rather take it as a precious testimony to the controversies this unusual social practice must have aroused at this early date, at least in the most sophisticated minds of the time. Besides the moral dimension of these early controversies, there also might have been social considerations involved, as I will try to show in the conclusions of this book.

[228] Cf. Schlesier (2011*b*) 177–178. See Davies (2000) for Dionysus breaking the barrier between humans and gods, a frontier impassable in Homer.

[229] Seaford (2006) 27, rightly says that 'The marginality of Dionysos [in Homer] is *ideological*'.

[230] See esp. above, pp. 89 and 99.

4.4.3 The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* as Witnesses to the History of the Symposion

In 1990, William J. Slater ingeniously analysed the 'sympotic ethics of the *Odyssey*', studying this poem 'as a work of ethical value in relation to the *symposion*'. 'An archaizing Homer'—he adds—'could have known the habits of the Classical *symposion* and deliberately concealed them; I should think this a likely but unprovable hypothesis' (Slater 1990, 213). I hope I have proved this intuition to be superbly right. Let me summarize the implications of my analyses in this chapter for the early history of the symposion.

First of all, the sphere of non-traditional referentiality of both poems yields clear traces of a nocturnal aristocratic wine-drinking gathering, which assemble a limited number of participants. Their convivial pastimes are organized according to the *epidexia*-principle, implying the competitive and most probably egalitarian character of these occasions.

Secondly, we cannot be certain as to the historicity of another manner of feasting, the *dais*, or 'heroic feast', whose constitutive feature was the division of the sacrificial meat among the diners by the leader of the local community. Some aspects of the inner logic of the *dais* look plausible in sociological terms (the workings of the *geras*), whilst the economic and political logic of the 'royal feast' viewed within the frames of a citizen-community seems idealized in the extreme.

Thirdly, it is exactly against the background of the workings of the *dais* that the peculiarity of the symposion comes to the fore. On the one hand, we witness an alternative lifestyle symbolized by sophisticated luxury (instead of the austere warrior ethos, and against consuming massive quantities of roasted meat) and the tension between the principles of rivalry and equality (as opposed to the predetermined hierarchy of feasters). On the other hand, the very contrast between the symposion and the *dais*, or rather the poetic ideal of the 'heroic feast', was bound to give rise to critical moral reflection on the symposion in a sympotic context.

Last but not least, the ambiguities surrounding the symposion were not only of a moral nature. Its absence from the traditional stock of epic poetry must have been equally disquieting. The latter factor may point to a relatively recent development of this custom, but based on

Homer we will never be able to date the moment of its rise. At this point, we should turn to our archaeological material to try to answer this question.

5

The Symposion and Archaeology Up to the Early Seventh Century BC

5.1 INTRODUCTION: WINE FOR THE DEAD AND WINE FOR THE LIVING

In my third chapter, I studied some of the scant architectural evidence from Geometric settlements (3.3.3). In this chapter, my data will primarily be derived from Protogeometric and Geometric funerary contexts.[1] With this in mind, it seems advisable to present the underlying principles and assumptions guiding this enquiry. First of all, my deep indebtedness to the groundbreaking study and general methodological approach of Ian Morris, *Burial and Ancient Society* (Cambridge, 1987), will be unmistakable throughout this chapter.[2] Accordingly, I treat burials 'as the material remains of self-representations of social structure through the agency of ceremony' (Morris 1987, 8). I also assume that 'archaeologically visible' formal burials, resulting from conspicuous funerary rituals, reflect the 'social persona' of the dead, namely 'a selection of the various social identities held by the deceased among the living'.[3]

[1] I do so despite all the inherent pitfalls of this class of evidence for a study of the society of the living. See in general, D'Agostino (1985) 47–58 as well as Morris (1987) 36–43. In a wider context, cf. e.g. Ucko (1969/70) 262–280; and Parker Pearson (1993) 203–229. Cf. also Bartoloni (2003) esp. 14–20.

[2] The general historical inferences I will draw from the archaeological data in the concluding sections of my book will, however, be radically different from Morris's. See also two very useful reviews of the book: D'Onofrio & D'Agostino (1993) 41–51 and Papadopulos (1993) 175–206 (followed by Ian Morris's reply: Morris 1993, 207–221). In general, cf. also Morris (1999).

[3] Morris (1987) 37: '. . . and the choice of roles to be given signification in the funeral is determined by the society's organizational principles' (ibid.).

However, an important divergence from the approach of Morris to the funerary record should be signalled at the outset. While adopting his notion of 'archaeological visibility', which underlines the availability of formal burials only to upper groups within the social hierarchy, I do not directly link EIA and early archaic formal burials with the notion of 'full membership of the community', i.e. with citizen rights within a given *polis*.[4] At the same time, I take variations in the size, number, character, and 'patterns' (concerning this latter notion, see below) of burial as potential indicators of profound changes in the nature of a given élite, both ideologically and in its objective social composition.[5]

In keeping with the aforementioned methodological principles for scrutinizing mortuary material, I will attempt to consider 'the *structure* rather than the *content* of the archaeological record. Instead of comparing forms of burial customs through time and space, it will be possible to trace changes in the principles which guided funerary behaviour and in the concept of the community' (Morris 1987, 9). In short, I will be looking for what may be called 'sympotic patterns', those generalized funerary rites or customs, appearing consistently in a given necropolis or burial plot in particular historical moments, which are symbolically related to the symposion.

One should not forget, however, that we are unlikely to find unambiguous indicators (or material 'tracer elements') of the symposion in the rudimentary class of funerary equipment, namely in individual vases or other objects put to what might appear as sympotic use. For example, the function of large *kraters*, mixing bowls universally interpreted as constitutive of aristocratic wine drinking, as grave markers are not necessarily indicative of the symposion properly speaking. It is enough to mention the instructive case of the monumental *krater* accompanying the famous PG burial of the Toumba 'Heroon' in Lefkandí—pre-dating our earliest testimonies of the symposion by at least two centuries. To put it in terms of M. Dietler's theory of 'commensal politics', such monumental vessels

[4] This idea is critical to I. Morris's overall picture of the archaic Greek *polis* and of the rise of the *polis* in particular.

[5] Houby-Nielsen (1992) 344 rightly criticizes I. Morris's approach (changes in funerary behaviour as indicative of the clash of conflicting ideologies) when she ascribes such 'variations in mortuary expressions [in the Kerameikos—M.W.] to differences of ideology within the same social group, the elite'. In the following pages, I will also take into account the possibility that 'the same social group, the elite' might have changed not only its ideologies, but also its actual composition.

may express the symbolism of 'empowering feasts' or 'patron-role feasting' and not 'diacritical feasting' such as the symposion. Quite simply, Aegean élites have always enjoyed communal wine drinking and its accompanying pleasures. For the same reason, the presence of specialized drinking-sets (combining *kraters*, jugs, and drinking cups) are far from unambiguously indicative of the symposion. For one thing, they already appear in Mycenaean material as well as in Cretan interments dating from the tenth and ninth centuries BC.[6]

All of these caveats inevitably bring us to the conclusion that only through the convergence of context-specific and contemporaneous 'sympotic patterns' can we hope to make a convincing case for the advent of the symposion. Out of necessity, our argument will therefore be circumstantial and cumulative in character. Nevertheless, my hope is to show that several concurrent 'patterns' visible in the archaeological record are sufficient to illuminate the historical process of the emergence of the symposion. I will argue that there are good reasons to maintain that the critical phase of this development can be placed at the turn of the ninth century BC and perhaps as early as the Middle Geometric (MG) I period, since several archaeologically visible and converging 'sympotic patterns' seem detectable, at least in Athenian material, in the MG II. It is important to emphasize here that that I do not expect the archaeological data to *prove* the emergence of the symposion on independent grounds. I work in this chapter on the assumption stemming from my previous chapters, namely that the epigram on the Late Geometric (LG) II 'Cup of Nestor' from Pithekoussai and the testimony of the Homeric poems *demonstrate* the existence of the symposion at some point in the eighth century BC.

5.2 AN HISTORICAL SIGNPOST: THE 'CUP OF NESTOR' IN ITS EUBOEAN CONTEXT

5.2.1 The 'Cup of Nestor', the Symposion, and Late Geometric Euboean Funerary Customs

The Pithekoussan necropolis in the valley of San Montano, which yielded the 'Cup of Nestor', may be considered superbly rich by virtue

[6] e.g. on Tekke cemetery on Crete (grr. 'J' and 'G'). See below, p. 290.

of the sheer number of graves falling within a relatively short time-span of the LG I and LG II periods (namely 493 excavated tombs dating from *c.*750–*c.*700 BC) and because of the variety and originality of its burial customs.[7] For the moment, any general interpretation of the 'funerary idiom' of this cemetery is extremely risky, since less than ten per cent of its surface area has thus far been excavated.[8]

* * *

The LG II (i.e. 725–700 BC) Tomb 168 is in many ways unparalleled in its Pithekoussan context and beyond.[9] First of all, the burial contains the remains of a 10 or 12–14 year-old boy (depending on two slightly divergent osteological assessments) who was cremated, rather than inhumed like the majority of his Pithekoussan subadult peers. But the most striking characteristics of this tomb come from its grave goods. Most importantly, the sheer number of objects accompanying the buried adolescent are staggering. The interment contains as many as 28 items, including 11 sympotic vases (out of a total of 26 vases):[10] 4 *kraters*, 3 *oinochoai*, and 4 cups of different types (including the inscribed *kotylē* called the 'Cup of Nestor'). The number of objects deposited in the grave by far surpasses all other contemporaneous burials in this cemetery. While it is true that the LG II grave 208 has 22 vases, only 2 are sympotic (an EPC *oinochoē* and an EPC *kotylē*, both original, not local imitations). Incidentally, it is worth noting that the latter burial belongs to a woman. Furthermore, the LG II Tomb 147 (a male burial?) contains as many as 19 items, of which only 2 are clearly sympotic vases (an *oinochoē* and a *skyphos*).[11] By way of comparison, the very well-preserved and contemporaneous gr. 167 (a male burial) has only a few objects, which include 2 *oinochoai*. Only one grave in this necropolis can really match Tomb 168, namely gr. 191 of the Early (or Middle) Corinthian period, which contains a female cremation with 39 grave goods, including 34 vases (12 of which served for wine drinking). However, this interment dates to more or less a century later. All in all, none of the Geometric

[7] For the Pithekoussan burial rites, see now esp. Ridgway (1992) 45–54; see also Buchner (1977) esp. 134–140; Buchner (1982) esp. 276–278; Snodgrass (2000) [1971], 174–175; Coldstream (2003) 208–209. Cf. briefly Osborne (2009) 123.

[8] As recently emphasized once again by Ridgway (2009) 444. Cf. Map 3.1.

[9] For the publication of this burial, see *Pithekoussai I*, pp. 212–223.

[10] For other types of vases in this burial, see briefly below, p. 254.

[11] However, fragments of at least three more *kotylai* have been found on site.

burials from the San Montano cemetery even come close to the lavish tomb of the 'Cup of Nestor'.

Amongst grave goods, the *kraters* from Tomb 168 deserve our attention first. There are two Euboean kraters (168-2, inv. no. 166780 and 168-1, inv. no. 166781), the latter bearing the intriguing retrograde inscription ΘΕΟ[12] (meaning that the burial yielded as many as two among the earliest Greek alphabetic inscriptions thus far discovered), and two local ones (no. 168-3 and 168-4; inv. nos. 166782 and 166783). The four *kraters* here are truly outstanding, especially given the fact that none of the 723 pre-classical graves from this cemetery contain a single sherd of a *krater*. On the other hand, fragments of 10 (or perhaps 12) more LG II *kraters* (two of them Euboean, the rest locally produced) are listed among the sporadic finds (Sp 1/1–10) from this cemetery. They are tentatively interpreted by the excavators as remains of grave markers,[13] but it also seems likely that they played some role in funerary ritual.[14] Be that as it may, Tomb 168 with its four *kraters*, two of them imported, looks amazing in its local context. It is clear that the family of the incumbent must have ascribed to them a special symbolic function.

Two issues must be clarified prior to interpreting this unusual grave. First, as I have already argued in Chapter 3 (3.2.1), the hypothesis of the alleged oriental provenance of the family owning the burial plot should not prevent us from considering this unusual grave as indicative of local Greek 'funerary idiom'. Second, the inscription on the aforementioned Euboean *krater* (168-1) should not occupy us for long. Given the lack of any subsequent (heroic?) cult activities

[12] For the inscription, see briefly Guarducci (1995) [1967], vol. I, p. 447 and Cordano (1984) 289, no. 2. But see above, p. 242 and below, n. 15.

[13] Cf. Ridgway (1992) 51. Two *kraters*, Sp 1/2 and Sp 1/5, seem high indeed, the latter 41cm tall (inv. 168817). This, however, cannot be compared with the coeval gigantic Athenian LG I grave *sēmata* (see below) or with the LG Euboean *krater,* probably of the same type (H. 114.91cm; see below, p. 278 and Figure 5.6), nor with the less conspicuous earlier Attic MG II grave markers such as that of the Kerameikos gr. 22 (see Coldstream 2003, fig. 23d on p. 76: H. 52.5cm).

[14] They all come either from the layer of dark earth beneath the LG II tumuli nos. 146, 147, and 148, or from two clearly distinct zones (see e.g. *Pithekoussai I*, Plan B II: sectors 22–27 GHIL) consisting of quite extensive layers of burnt matter, which contained a large quantity of scattered burnt sherds (*cocci bruciati sparsi*) and fragments of fine pottery. G. Buchner compared these zones with the *Opferrinnen* from the Athenian Kerameikos (see below, p. 283 with n. 98) suggesting that it is possible to understand them as the areas where 'secondary pyres' once stood: these were used for burning some grave goods, but not the dead themselves.

visible on site and the perfect continuity within the frames of a well-defined family plot between this tumulus, the preceding burial (gr. 166) and the following ones (gr. 165), any direct link between the buried adolescent and the inscription is ruled out. Besides, ΘΕΟ (i.e. ΘΕΟΥ), 'belonging to [the] divinity', is certainly not the same thing as 'belonging to (or 'offered to') the hero', so any immediate connection with the boy is out of the question.[15]

Besides the aforementioned banqueting vases, the burial contained three *lekythoi*, one miniature *lekythos*, ten *aryballoi*, a small impasto cup, one hand-made *chytra* and fragments of a fibula. But the most intriguing fact about this grave is the total absence of weapons (see below and 4.2.2). In more general terms, the crucial thing is that the relatives of the deceased adolescent decided to distinguish his interment from its social environment using not jewellery, a lavish quantity of orientalia,[16] 'antique' heirlooms, specialized tools, or some other class of readily obtainable rich grave goods, but by placing in his grave numerous sympotic vessels. Amongst these vessels were a large number of emblematic ones, i.e. *kraters*, never used in this capacity in the local funerary custom, as well as the *kotylē* bearing a subtle sympotic poem. Two *kraters*, the *kotylē*, and two other cups were imported, giving this burial even more splendour. It is important to note that the deceased himself was obviously too young to enjoy symposia when still alive—even as a *neos*.[17] To mark him off as a member of the social group that cherished the sympotic lifestyle is

[15] Such a connection was postulated in the discussion following my paper, Wecowski (forthcoming *a*) delivered in May 2005, among other things in view of the breathtaking wealth of the grave goods. Note that Wachter (2001) 171 ('EUC 2') reads this *dipinto* as the name *Δεξ(ι)θέϙο*(?), incorporating into this word three signs usually interpreted as belonging to the encircling decoration. The inscription would be 'an owner inscription or a dedication to a human' and the name would have belonged to the father of the grave's incumbent 'who may also have been the owner of the Nestor Cup' (ibid.). However, since a similar inscription ΘΕΟ has recently been found on a LG amphora in Methone in coastal Macedonia (*Methone Pierias I*, no. 5 (Mθ 2238), p. 342–344), it is better to posit a direct link between the inscription and the sympotic context of the vase's original function. In that case, the abbreviated formula 'belonging to [the] divinity' could allude to the tutelary god of the symposion, Dionysus, whose connection with wine and its (ab-)use is already clear in Homer (see 4.4.2 above). As such, the inscribed sympotic vessel would once again emphasize the lifestyle to which the family of the dead aspired.

[16] For such objects (most probably amulets, associated mainly with subadult burials) in this cemetery, see briefly Ridgway (1992) 65–67 and Coldstream (2003) 211–212, as well as *Pithekoussai I*, p. 767–774.

[17] Cf. above, p. 34.

clearly indicative of the ambitions of his family, and most probably of his father, who might have been the owner of the 'Cup of Nestor'. In this particular case, the relatives of the deceased decided to symbolically outmatch all of their local peers.

Of course, we will never know the particular calculations behind their decision or the provenance of massive resources that made its fulfilment possible, but this case of unparalleled funerary ostentation should no doubt be interpreted against the background of fierce competition amongst members of the local élite. Interestingly, this rich family did not decide to have recourse to the 'princely' or warrior funerary rite known from neighbouring Kyme on the mainland (see below, 5.2.2), the settlement probably founded not long after Pithekoussai as the 'new polis'.[18] Given the difference, one may assume that, for reasons we will leave undetermined, the Pithekoussan family used the awesome sympotic extravagance to symbolically reflect the highest social status to which they could successfully aspire. Incidentally, the same social group would consist of natural consumers, so to say, of the high-quality vessels of the Cesnola Painter and his followers excavated on the island, such as the *krater* signed by a certain '–inos' and found on Mezzavia hill;[19] small sherds of such *kraters*, very difficult to date, were found in the domestic pottery dump in Monte di Vico (the so-called Scarico Gosetti).[20]

Actually, a similar phenomenon of sympotic symbolism can be detected in the majority of the incomparably less well-equipped graves in the San Montano cemetery. Already in LG I phase (*c.*750–725 BC), there is a clear 'default' pattern, which required, in the case of interments equipped with grave goods, the dead to be accompanied in their tombs by at least one *oinochoē* and one drinking

[18] The debate surrounding the status of the earliest Greek settlement on Pithekoussai (cf. Ridgway 1992, 107–109; D'Agostino 1994; Greco 1994, and more generally Mele 2003) should be viewed in the context of the discussion about the nature of the earliest (pre-colonial?) contacts between the Greeks and the indigenous peoples in Italy and elsewhere. Recently, cf. Wilson (1997); Osborne (1998), and Domínguez (2011). See also below, n. 41 and p. 299 n. 144.

[19] For the Mazzola *krater* inscription, see above, pp. 137–138. For the Cesnola painter and circulation of aristocratic sympotic wares in the Mediterranean, see below, pp. 278–280 with Figure 5.6.

[20] On Scarico Gosetti see now Ridgway (1992) 84–91. Coldstream (1998*b*) esp. 304, compiled useful statistics of the vessel types from this site, emphasizing a lion's share of luxurious drinking pottery, in particular *skyphoi*, in the earliest phase of the settlement. Cf. also Ridgway (1992) 88–89.

cup (*skyphos*, *kotylē*, *kantharos*, etc.).[21] In the absence of mixing bowls from all the Pithekoussan burials but one, the recurring combination of a pouring vessel with a drinking cup may be regarded as a rudimentary drinking set. True, as the excavators observed long ago, the provenance of both elements in a grave could differ. Whereas various types of drinking cups were often found shattered and burned (no doubt thrown on to the pyre during the funeral), *oinochoai* were usually intact (and carefully deposited in the grave). This difference made one of the excavators, Giorgio Buchner, think of a 'Homeric' burial custom—the jugs would have been used to quench the flames of the pyre with wine, as in a famous scene in the *Iliad*.[22] Since, however, this use of 'pairs'—of a pouring and a drinking vessel—seems widespread in this necropolis and such 'pairs' were found in skeletal burials as well,[23] this combination of grave goods does not seem accidental and may be considered meaningful in symbolic terms.

As with the case of the adolescent from Tomb 168, the families of a substantial part of the dead in this necropolis seem to have wanted to emphasize that they belonged to the group for whom ritual wine drinking was an important element of self-definition. This is all the more remarkable given that this funerary habit concerned not only adult males, the actual participants in symposia but, as in the case of the tomb of the 'Cup of Nestor', male subadults and even female subadults and women,[24] appearing in both cremations and inhumations. The symbolism of these burials should, then, be interpreted as reflecting group ideals rather than individual ambitions. Furthermore, it looks like local imitations and even coarse wares were used when fine ceramics were unavailable to equip the deceased with the

[21] Cf. Buchner (1982) 283.

[22] *Il.* XXIII 237–238. For this hypothesis, see Buchner (1982) 282 and Ridgway (1992) 50 (cf., however, Boardman 1988, 172, for his reservations about this interpretation: 'Unburnt jugs and bowls accompanying the cremations seem to attest libation rather than fire control'), cf. Coldstream (1998*b*) 303. In general, see also Coldstream (2003) 331–334, on 'heroic' burials. Unlike the case of the Eretrian West Gate cemetery or that of the royal burials at Salamis in Cyprus (for both, see below), the (hypothetical) farewell libations in Pithekoussai are the only allegedly 'Homeric' trait of the funerary ritual.

[23] See e.g. grr. 309A, 323, 324, 325, 328, 354, 355, 359, 389, 390 (all of them LG II).

[24] One should not forget that the sex of the incumbent of a cremation grave is often purely hypothetical. See *Pithekoussai I*, p. 19. In general, cf. Strömberg (1993) *passim.*

'sympotic pair' of an *oinochoē* and a drinking cup.[25] Therefore, we are entitled to conclude that less wealthy families of some importance (and surely those with élite aspirations) did their best to meet élite standards by imitating the symbols of the lifestyle of their more successful fellow-citizens.[26]

* * *

Students of the LG burials from the neighbouring Kyme on the mainland have a much more difficult task as compared with those working on the Pithekoussan material. Consecutive excavations from the second half of the nineteenth century as well as the most authoritative publication on the Kymean burials (Gábrici 1913) systematically neglected smaller and less spectacular finds and, even more so, graves devoid of grave-goods.[27] As a result, we can still rely on publications of lavish 'princely' tombs (see below), but little is known about the less conspicuous ones and we are doomed to speculation partly based on available Pithekoussan analogies. On balance, however, we can assume along with G. Buchner that the inhabitants of the Geometric Kyme observed funerary customs not very different from those known from Pithekoussai, and therefore that the 'sympotic pattern' detected in the San Montano cemetery might likewise have been in use in Kyme.[28]

In the wider Euboean context of the time, it is more difficult to provide even tentative conclusions as regards the Euboean fatherland in the Aegean.[29] Due to the existence of the modern town in the same

[25] See esp. gr. (both of them LG II) nos. 323 (a poor female burial: an *oinochoē* 'grezza locale' with two EPC *skyphoi*, one of them locally imitated) and 324 (an inconspicuous burial of a nine-year-old boy: an *oinochoē* 'grezza locale' with a locally imitated EPC *kantharos*). Cf. gr. no. 291 (a poor LG II *enchytrismos*: 'amfora grezza' of local production with a locally imitated EPC *skyphos*).

[26] The symbolic value of wine drinking is further confirmed by a remarkable piece of jewellery in the LG II Tomb 208. Among other items in this rich burial, the cremated woman was given a bronze pendant in the shape of an *oinochoē* (nos. 208–24; Tab. CXXXVI and 91; inv. no. 166997). Such unusual personal ornaments seem to point to a set of important group values in much the same way as miniature sympotic vessels placed on the lids of large vases in MG Attic burials. See below.

[27] See G. Buchner (1977) 135–137 and Valenza Mele (1981) 97–99. Unlike smaller, more compact, and therefore more durable vessels (such as *aryballoi*), open-shaped and larger clay vessels (such as different types of cups and *oinochoai*) are virtually absent from publications, having been neglected by excavators and those subsequently in charge of the excavated material from Kyme. Recently, see also Greco & Mermati (2007) and (2010/2011); in general cf. D'Acunto (2012).

[28] Buchner (1977) 135–137. Cf. Buchner (1982) esp. 285.

[29] It was G. Buchner who suggested this comparison. See esp. Buchner (1982) 285–286 and in general Buchner (1977).

location, we do not have enough comparable Geometric material from Chalkis.[30] Of the fairly numerous scattered burial plots known from Eretria, two are of special interest. What we find in the large cemetery by the sea (the so-called Hygeionomeion burial plot) is a monumental LG amphora (M.N. 14763; 1m high, so surely useless for real-life activities),[31] which perhaps served as a grave marker,[32] not only for an individual interment but for the whole cemetery. Earlier still in Eretria, another élite burial plot at Odos Arist. Eratonymou (excavated by A. K. Andreiomenou), yielded an Attic MG II 'drinking set'.[33] All this may potentially hint at the symbolic importance of wine drinking in the funerary customs of Eretrian élite. But, as we already know, neither the presence of drinking sets nor that of large banqueting vessels used as grave markers need be indicative of a specifically sympotic funerary symbolism. To link such phenomena, as well as those observed in Pithekoussai and Kyme, with the symposion as I have defined it, we must first to ask ourselves about the social status of the group or groups which had recourse to wine drinking symbolism in the Euboean world. And here, despite the testimony of the 'Cup of Nestor', the issue becomes fairly complicated, since the most important socio-political questions surrounding the Pithekoussan cemetery arise when it is placed in the wider contemporaneous Euboean context (see Map 5.1).

5.2.2 Pithekoussai, Kyme, Eretria—The 'Princes' and the Aristocrats of the Euboean World (Eighth and Seventh Century BC)

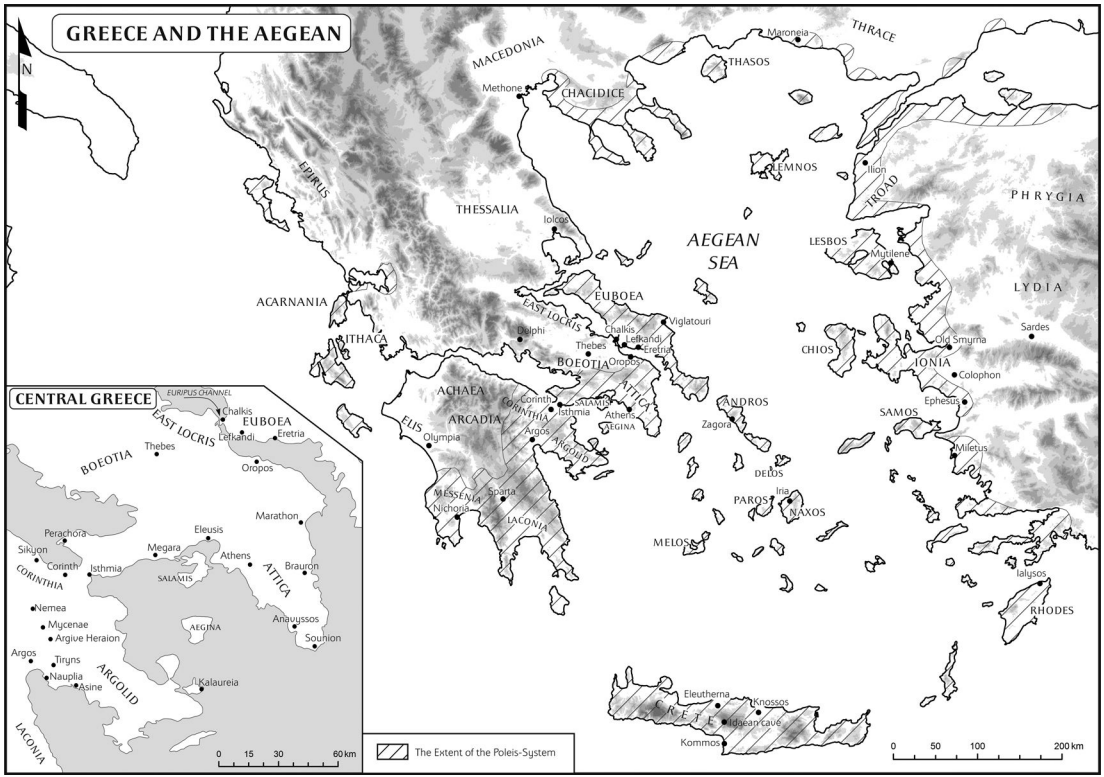
I believe that scholars have drawn mistaken conclusions from the comparison between the Pithekoussan, Kymean, and Eretrian burials. To put it briefly, the most conspicuous graves on Pithekoussai were very different from the spectacular burials in Kyme and Eretria. In the latter, the famous group of late eighth- and early seventh-century 'heroic'

[30] See, however, Andriomenou (1998) 156–161.

[31] Thus Crielaard (2007) 176–177. Cf. *Eretria XVII.2*, p. 71 with pl. 120.7 (B. Blandin also thinks of a funerary *sēma*; the excavator K. Kourouniotis interpreted this amphora as an *enchytrismos*).

[32] A series of golden diadems, one a more aristocratic status symbol, dating from *c.*725–690 BC, were also found there. Cf. Crielaard (2007) 171–175.

[33] In general, see *Eretria XVII.2*, p. 29–34. Cf. Crielaard (2007) 183–184. For details, see below, p. 291.



Map 5.1 Greece and the Aegean

cremations was unearthed at the Western Gate;[34] in the former, there is a series of awesome 'princely' tombs.

A small élite burial plot at the West Gate was in use between *c.*720 and 690 BC, receiving children (interred in wooden coffins) and adults—both men and women—(grr. 5–10), whose incinerated remnants were placed in valuable bronze cauldrons. Apart from jewellery and other personal effects, the West Gate cremations contain weapons (ritually broken or twisted). The burials were dubbed 'heroic' due to the analogous funerary rite described by Homer.[35] However, they lack pottery. Soon after the disappearance of the last member of the group to which the burial plot of the West Gate belonged, the tombs began to attract a cult and a triangular *hērōon* was eventually erected above the graves.[36] Therefore, the exceptional status of the dead (a princely or royal clan of Eretria?) cannot be doubted. In Kyme, as already mentioned, the situation is notoriously difficult. However, it is clear that a number of graves dating from the late eighth and early seventh centuries (including the spectacular finds from the so-called Fondo Artiáco, especially the famous tomb 104)[37] present striking analogies with those from Eretria. Cremations in bronze cauldrons, with large quantities of weapons and silver and bronze items, are even richer than the Eretrian burials and have unmistakable counterparts in several 'princely' graves (*tombe principesche*) in non-Greek Italy (such as those from Fabriano, Praeneste, Castel di Decima, and Pontecagnano).[38]

In view of these spectacular tombs, scholars were struck by the lack of so-called 'princely' burials on the island of Pithekoussai and took

[34] On the Eretrian burial customs, see in general Coldstream (2003) 177–178 and Walker (2004) 107–108. B. Blandin gives an updated review of the Eretrian cemeteries and funerary habits (*Eretria XVII.1*, esp. p. 31–37, and *passim*).

[35] See esp. *Il.* XVIII 343–355; XXIII 163–225, 237–248; XXIV 784–804; Cf. above, n. 22.

[36] See in particular C. Bérard, in *Eretria III*, completed and developed in Bérard (1982) 89–105; cf. also Coldstream (2003) 177–178. Recently, cf. Crielaard (2007) 182–185. For a sceptical view of the (alleged) heroic cult at the West Gate, see Martin (1975) 48–49. An updated interpretation of this necropolis is in *Eretria XVII.2*, p. 35–58. See also Blandin (1998).

[37] See Pellegrini (1903) esp. cols. 225–286; Gábrici (1913) vol. I, esp. cols. 213–248. Cf. Buchner (1977) 285–286; Valenza Mele (1981) and briefly (1992) 149.

[38] Cf. Albore Livadie (1975) 53–58; D'Agostino (1975) 107–110. See also D'Agostino (1977) esp. 54–61 (on the burial ritual and ideology of grr. 926 and 928) and *passim*, as well as D'Agostino (1982). In general, see recently Bartoloni (2003) Chap. 6.

this difference to be meaningful. Based on the total absence of weapons in the graves, G. Buchner concluded that the cemetery of San Montano only received representatives of lower social groups and a middle social stratum—merchants, artisans, peasants and seamen—excluding the highest, and dominating, aristocratic élite. On this hypothesis, we still await the discovery of truly aristocratic burial plots on Pithekoussai.[39]

Although this last contention may one day be proved right with the unearthing of lavish 'princely' burials on the island, I think that the whole argument is at least partly flawed. This assessment of the social position of the (richly equipped) dead at San Montano looks dubious the moment we confront it with the testimony of the sympotic 'Cup of Nestor'.[40] O. Murray, however, in agreement with Buchner's hypothesis, claims that the symposion might have originated 'in a society dominated by traders rather that aristocrats' (Murray 1994, 54), for example on Pithekoussai.[41] How it is that this (allegedly) originally non-aristocratic custom won over, and became emblematic of, the Greek aristocrats, he does not suggest. Whereas the adoption of status symbols by an inferior social group from the superior one would seem natural, it would be difficult to imagine a reverse phenomenon for purely prestigious reasons. And all this, as we remember, is postulated for a society in which the symposion served as a paramount status-marker for those aspiring to the higher social status that was opposed to the *kakoi*, 'commoners'.

Buchner's theory seems to be based on an inappropriate definition of the social group labeled 'aristocracy'. I have already dealt with this issue in Chapter 1 (1.1), where I adopted B. Bravo's model of archaic

[39] See in particular Buchner (1977) 139 and (1982) 278–280 and 285, as well as Bartoněk and Buchner (1995) 134–135. Cf., for instance, Ridgway (1992) e.g. 50 and Coldstream (1998*b*) 308, who thinks of 'a prosperous bourgeoisie'.

[40] Symptomatically, A. Mele (2003) accepts Buchner's hypothesis while ascribing at the same time the aristocratic character to the fragments of *kraters* sporadically found at San Montano (see above, p. 253). He also expresses his hopes of finding truly aristocratic burials on the island in future, as if forgetting that all the *kraters* whose archaeological context is known come from gr. 168. With Buchner, however, he takes this burial as belonging to a representative of the Pithekoussan 'middle class'. In all this, the absence of weapons plays a decisive part in assessing the social status of the richly equipped San Montano incumbents.

[41] Let us note that the rigid definition of the Euboean 'aristocracy', with its corollary hypothesis of a special social composition of the Pithekoussan settlement, is related to the idea of a peculiar status of this settlement. With its allegedly specialized middle-class mercantile élites, Pithekoussai cannot be viewed as a potential *polis*.

Greek society based on a rich set of literary sources from the period slightly later than the testimony of LG Pithekoussan graves. I assume that—for all the local differences—already in the seventh century BC aristocracy properly speaking formed a rather wide stratum in archaic Greek citizen-societies. Therefore, it would be mistaken to identify this group with the social circles having recourse to a peculiar 'funerary idiom'—be it 'heroic' or 'princely'. After all, such burial rites are rare in the Aegean. If we decided to identify as aristocracy only the exiguous 'princely' or 'heroic' élite of eighth-century Euboeans, we must assume that the 'aristocracy' of that period is not the same social group as the large aristocracy well known from later literary sources.[42] As we remember, the aristocrats of the seventh and of the first half of the sixth century emphasized time and again the danger of declassing its members while stigmatizing at the same time the social advancement of the successful *kakoi*. In Kyme, the 'princely' tombs continue well into the seventh century and their incumbents, at least in the first generations of the *polis*' existence, must have been of equal status with their peers among the powerful 'princes' of central Italy. The Kymean 'princes', and most probably the Eretrian (would-be) 'heroes' were definitely not in danger of an outright economic downfall and no *kakos* of their communities could even dream of joining the ranks of this exiguous élite. Therefore, they must be regarded as a separate social entity.

So the question arises here of how to describe and how to understand the social status of the group, which used the 'heroic' or 'princely' funerary rites as a tool of its symbolic self-definition. Given the aforementioned close analogies with the *tombe principesche* in Italy, the difference between the Pithekoussan graves and the 'princely' graves in Kyme and Eretria is best explained, I think, by the idea that the rather small group of the Euboean communities developed its own funerary rites, which served to enforce its ideal self-definition as a superior warrior élite with strong connections to peers elsewhere. For some reason, they tried hard to differentiate themselves from other, less wealthy and less influential, members of their local élites by way of a funerary ostentation. Accordingly, I would call this group the 'princely élite' of the Euboean communities under scrutiny and tentatively suggest a threefold model for the social

[42] In my conclusions (6.3) it will turn out that aristocracy, properly speaking, is attested already in the Homeric poems.

composition of citizenry in at least some among early archaic *poleis*, consisting of the *kakoi*, the wide group of aristocrats properly speaking, and the limited social stratum of 'princes' that eventually died out in the majority of archaic Greek citizen-communities. I shall try to trace the historical background of this socio-political constellation in the conclusions of my book, but already at this point it is possible, I submit, to understand this situation better by comparing more carefully the burial customs of the 'princes' with those of the wider aristocratic élites of the eighth- and seventh-century Euboean communities.

* * *

As we remember, the rich family who equipped the tomb of the 'Cup of Nestor' focused on wine-drinking funerary symbolism using a conspicuous number of sympotic clay vessels as grave goods, some of them rather spectacular. Perhaps the most staggering feature of the Euboean 'princely' (and 'heroic') burials is the fact that they almost entirely lack ceramic vases, but, in the case of Kymean cremation graves, feature precious metal ones instead. In the Fondo Artiáco gr. 104, there is just one clay amphora, accompanied by a silver *oinochoē* and a bronze *skyphos*. More silver vessels were found in another Kymean burial plot, the so-called Fondo Maiorano. In a similar vein, the only piece of clay pottery in a 'heroic' grave in Eretria is a simple *oinochoē* found in gr. 9 of the West Gate *hērōon* (possibly remaining from the pyre), whereas metal vases seem to be absent. This does not mean that Kymean and Eretrian 'princely' or 'heroic' élites did not want to stress their access to what we may call sympotic lifestyle. Quite the contrary. I posit that for some reason they just wanted symbolically to outmatch everyone else enjoying this lifestyle in their respective communities either by outdoing them in sympotic ostentation or by having recourse to another funerary 'idiom', namely the warrior one, or both at the same time.

This line of reasoning seems to be borne out nowadays by a spectacular recent discovery in the neighbourhood of the agora in Eretria. Rich grave goods were found in what remains from a funerary pyre, prominently featuring a set of clay drinking vessels: an *oinochoē*, a *hydria*, numerous *skyphoi*, and as many as four *kraters*—all of them destroyed during the funerary banquet or on the pyre.[43] There is also one piece of gold (a gold foil diadem), one Oriental item (a scarab), and

[43] See Psalti (2009) and (2010); cf. Psalti (2011).



Figure 5.1 A Eretria, MG I/II 'krater of black horses' (*c.*760 BC; H. 29.5 cm); Eretria Archaeological Museum, inv. M.E. 19565. Drawing by A. Filipowska (after Psalti 2009, figs. 1a and 2a–b). Courtesy of A. Filipowska

two non-drinking clay vessels (a *pyxis* and a Cypriot *lekythion*), but strikingly no weapon whatsoever.[44] The analogy with the Pithekoussan tomb of the 'Cup of Nestor' is very close, by virtue of the preponderance of drinking vases (including in both cases four *kraters*)[45] and of the absence of weapons. Even more intriguing is one of the Eretrian vessels, a pedestalled *krater* (M.E. 19565) (see Figure 5.1 A). dated on stylistic grounds to the transitional phase between the MG II and LG I periods, namely to *c.*760 BC, that is, say, a generation or two before the

[44] This fact, given the abundance of drinking vessels, cannot be explained by the hypothesis of a female pyre (note that the sex of the deceased cannot be established). Of course, theoretically it cannot be excluded that weapons were present among the grave goods of the deceased in his (her?) burial, but this hypothesis does not invalidate the argument based on the modes of funerary display as evidenced by the pyre itself, with its intentionally destroyed equipment.

[45] Their number should not be linked pragmatically only with the requirements of a lavish funerary banquet, but must have also contributed to the prestige of the pyre and of the following burial.



Figure 5.1 B

analogous Pithekoussan burial. Its metopes show two consecutive stages of horse copulation, a unique appearance of this motif in early Greek art. The second stage is adjacent to another figural scene, this time a human couple copulating (perhaps the oldest image of its kind in Greek art), most probably a man with a woman, but given the poor state of preservation of the image a male adolescent as a partner cannot be excluded (Figure 5.1 B).

One of the possible interpretations of the scene, namely a 'sacred marriage' (*hieros gamos*) somehow associated with the symbolism of the animal scenes, seems rather unlikely. I would prefer to read the whole as sexual intercourse amusingly mirrored by the scene of animal copulation. At any rate, the deliberate link between the two is beyond doubt. It is more likely than not that the 'pictorial program' of the vase is to be linked with the natural environment of the vessel's use, namely, with banqueting rather than with its hypothetical ritual employment. If so, the corresponding scenes would reflect two emblematic aspects of aristocratic lifestyle: horse-breeding and eroticism (heterosexual or homoerotic) as pleasurable subjects to talk, or sing, about during a banquet.[46] If my argument holds, in this last aspect, the analogy with the short poem inscribed on the 'Cup of Nestor' becomes unmistakable. At least this aspect of the sympotic lifestyle proper would thus be attested to as early as in the first half of the eighth century BC and the remarkably sophisticated epigram from Pithekoussai could accordingly be viewed in a wider historical context.

Now, although weapons are totally absent from this pyre, the dead must have belonged to the highest élite of the Eretrian society. This is

[46] It is worthwhile noting that the Euboean élite was referred to as *hippeis* or *hippobotai*. See Hdt V 77, 2–3 (with comm. *ad loc*. by Nenci 1994, 271; cf. Hdt VI 100,1); Arist. fr. 560 Rose (*ap*. Str. X 1,8 [C. 447]). cf. Mele (1975) and Coldstream (1994) 85. In general, cf. also Dentzer (1982) 438–441. On early Greek horsemen see esp. Greenhalgh (1973); *non vidi*: L. J. Worley, *Hippeis: The Cavalry of Ancient Greece.* (Boulder, 1994).

substantiated not only by the richness of the pyre but also by its placement close to the area once identified by A. Mazarakis Ainian with 'the aristocratic quarter',[47] the seat of the most powerful clans of EIA Eretria. In this particularly prestigious sector, specialized sympotic display comes to the fore already in the first half of the eighth century, underlining the access of the dead to ceremonial wine consumption in a relaxed atmosphere infused by eroticism.

* * *

To put it cautiously, what makes me interpret some aspects of the Euboean burials as evidencing the existence of the symposion in the MG and LG periods—and thus substantiating my conclusions based on the testimony of the 'Cup of Nestor' and of the Homeric poems—are not some isolated archaeological phenomena, but a combination of several 'sympotic patterns'. First, the self-definition of the spectacularly rich tomb 168 of the San Montano necropolis in sympotic terms, combined with the conscious exclusion of weapons from this burial. Second, we observe a very similar logic of prestigious self-representation emerging from the Eretrian pyre a generation or two earlier. Third, one recognizes analogous aspirations in a group of less lavishly equipped tombs in San Montano, consistently featuring the 'sympotic pair' in their grave goods. Last but not least, the so-called 'princely' or 'heroic' graves of the Euboean world, while having recourse to another, warrior, symbolism emphasize at the same time the convivial lifestyle of their incumbents, but this time excluding clay pottery and focusing on metal wares. At least the last two phenomena seem to point to a lively 'ideological' debate surrounding the means of self-representation of the Euboean élites in convivial terms in the late eighth and early seventh century BC.

5.2.3 Lefkandí and Protogeometric Euboean Funerary Rites Pertaining to Wine Drinking

Wine drinking as an important status marker, then, must have played a crucial role in the Euboean societies, both in the Aegean and overseas, in the eighth and in the earlier seventh century BC. Happily, we are in a position to compare this situation with earlier developments in the same historical milieu, thanks to the publication of the anticipatory volume of *Lefkandi III.2* containing plates and useful tables listing the contents of individual tombs and pyres from the Toumba cemetery in Lefkandí, the most important élite burial plot in

[47] See above, p. 183 with n. 180.

the best-documented Euboean site of the Protogeometric period.[48] The excavators record as many as 87 graves with grave goods and 33 non-empty pyres, so the comparative material is sufficient for our present purpose. And I think one may tentatively say that no 'sympotic pattern' can be detected there.

Unlike in Geometric (Italian) Kyme and Eretria, there is no recognizable distinction between the tombs containing weapons and those containing clay pottery. As far as I can see, not a single grave in this cemetery had a lavish drinking set or, alternatively, a rich assemblage of metallic objects as its only noble status marker. Moreover, only a few tombs and pyres produced large quantities of drinking vessels.[49] At any rate, we cannot see there a clear 'sympotic pattern', in other words, a predilection for the 'sympotic pair' of a cup and an *oinochoē*. Only a limited number of tombs and three pyres yielded diverse combinations of two or more drinking vessels.[50] Interestingly, as in the case of San Montano (and unlike Geometric Eretria), *kraters* are extremely rare. Only two pyres yielded these,[51] so it is fair to conclude that mixing-bowls were seldom used in the funerary ritual (and almost never as grave markers, since all the sherds of *kraters* there were heavily or partially burnt).[52]

The richest graves in the Protogeometric Toumba cemetery present a very eclectic assemblage of grave goods. The Sub-Protogeometric II Tomb 79A is the only one to yield large *kraters* and has two vessels of

[48] See already *Lefkandi I* for other cemeteries in Lefkandi (in particular Skoubris and Palia Perivolia).

[49] There are just a few exceptional interments: gr. 55 (with 15 cups); gr. 80 (SPG II–IIIa: 3 psc *skyphoi*, 9 pedestalled *skyphoi*, and one more cup). Cf. gr. 39 (an *oinochoē* and 12 cups) and pyre no. 14 (SPG IIIa: 15+ psc *skyphoi*).

[50] Namely, besides those adduced in the previous note: T.15 (SPG I)—2 cups, 1 jug/juglet, 1 trefoil *oinochoē*; T.26 (LPG)—1 cup, 1 *skyphos* (with circles), 4 trefoil *oinochoai*; T.38 (SPG II–IIIa)—3 cups, 4 jugs/juglets, 1 trefoil *oinochoē*; T.42 (LGP or SPG I)—1 psc *skyphos*, 1 *skyphos* (other), 1 jugs/juglets, 2 trefoil *oinochoai*; T.44 (LPG)—4 cups, 1 jug/juglet, 1 trefoil *oinochoē*; T.46 (LPG)—1 cup, 3 jugs/juglets, 1 trefoil *oinochoē*; T.47 (SPG II)—2 cups, 1 psc *skythos*, 1 *skyphos* (other), 1 trefoil *oinochoē*; T.54 (LPG)—3 cups, 6 jugs/juglets, 2 trefoil *oinochai*; T.57 (LPG)—1 psc *skyphos*, 2 jugs/juglets, 1 trefoil *oinochoē*; T.59 (LPG/SPG)—1 *skyphos* (circles), 1 psc *skyphos*, 1 trefoil *oinochoē*; T.71 (LPG)—2 cups, 1 jug/juglet, 2 trefoil *oinochai*; T.74 (SPG IIIa)—2 pedestalled *skyphoi*, 1 trefoil *oinochoē*; T.78 (SPG I–IIIa)—2 cups, 1 trefoil *oinochoē*; P.3 (SPG I-II)—1 cup, 1 trefoil *oinochoē*; P.32 (LPG)—1 psc *skyphos*, 1 trefoil *oinochoē*. Similarly in grr. 5, 13, 22, 31, 33 i 70. Cf. also grr. 8, 12, 16, 32, 34, 40, 41, 48, 59a in the Skoubris cemetery and in grr. 3, 10, 16, 19, 25b, 27, 36, 43 as well as P. 11 in the Palia Perivolia necropolis.

[51] P.8 (SPG I–II period)—one or more *kraters*; P.13 (SPG II)—two or more *kraters*.

[52] However, J. N. Coldstream, no doubt well informed by the excavators, thought that the monumental *krater* from SPG II gr. 79A (see below) 'may have served as a grave monument' (Coldstream 2003, 372).

that kind (two more graves contain just small *kraters* or *krateriskoi*: grr. 39–12 and 41–10). The burial is well dated thanks to two almost identical Attic *oinochoai* of the EG II period (i.e. *c.*875–850 BC on the orthodox chronology).[53] The burial rite somewhat corresponds to the aforementioned 'princely' tombs from Kyme, Eretria, and non-Greek Italy. The remains of the pyre were carefully gathered, put into a great bronze cauldron with some grave offerings, placed in an unusual niche cut into the walls of the shaft, and subsequently closed using a huge boulder. Next, the whole shaft was filled with other grave goods, mainly consisting of pottery. In the niche, alongside the cauldron, the excavators found an extraordinary selection of prestigious items. Understandably, a 'killed' iron sword and spearhead were accompanied by a mass of 25 arrowheads (9 more were placed in the fill of the shaft), 2 iron daggers and a bronze grater[54]—all this clearly emphasizing the warrior status of the incumbent. However, based on the discovery of several pieces of a bronze scales with weights deposited in the niche, the interment was described as a 'Euboean Warrior Trader'. Another aspect of the burial can be observed in the fill of the grave. What we find here, besides an amazing cylindrical seal ('an antique of great age, belonging to a class of N. Syrian cylinders dated around 1800 BC' (Popham and Lemos 1995, 154)), is an abundant assemblage of pottery. Two Cypriot jugs and six local pendent semicircle 'plates' are much less important in this context than 'two monumental standed kraters of which, sadly, only parts survived' (Popham and Lemos 1995, 156).[55] These are completed by just one (rather atypical) local *skyphos* and the two aforementioned Attic EG II *oinochoai*, most probably forming a prestigious drinking set.

It is obviously hazardous to interpret a burial so remarkable in its contemporaneous context. Nonetheless, another rich interment is worth mentioning as a connected matter. Among other things, the Late Protogeometric Tomb 39 contained one more 'princely' status-marker:[56] a bronze set of wheels with axle (an analogous find in the

[53] In general, see Popham and Lemos (1995). For a useful caveat regarding the excavators' overall interpretation of the 'Euboean Warrior Trader' burial see, however, Papadopoulos (1997) esp. 192.

[54] On bronze graters as symbolic prestigious items, see esp. Ridgway (1997) 325–344; cf. also Cerchiai (2007).

[55] But cf. above, n. 13, for the hypothesis that one of the *kraters* may have actually been used as a grave marker.

[56] See Popham, Touloupa, and Sackett (1982*b*) 217–220.

Geometric Kyme was yielded by gr. 104, for example), alongside some gold jewellery, a few pieces of iron weaponry, and a great deal of convivial pottery (including one neck-handled amphora, a leg-handled bowl, a lugged bowl, and an *oinochoē*, as well as five red-slip *kantharoi*, four *skyphoi*, a *krateriskos*, two more cups, and a miniature jug). Hence, it seems legitimate to conclude that the distinction between 'princely' (or warrior) and aristocratic tombs (properly speaking) that we recognize from Geometric Eretria and Pithekoussai/Kyme is non-existent in the case of Protogeometric Lefkandí. The convivial ostentation of Tomb 79A, at first sight analogous with the grave of the 'Cup of Nestor' from Pithekoussai, involving two superb *kraters* and two precious imported Attic *oinochoai*, does not preclude the warrior burial rite and hence does not look like the autonomous means of ideal self-definition of the highest Lefkandí élite. This phenomenon fits well with the previously observed absence of 'sympotic patterns' in less lavishly equipped graves in the Toumba cemetery.

According to the excavators, the spectacular Tomb 79A can, in many respects, be placed within the tradition of the burial rite of the famous Middle Protogeometric 'Heroon' of Lefkandí (*c.*1000–950 BC).[57] One of the reconstructed *kraters* from Tomb 79A (no. T.79A–7; height: 38.0cm) was, according to the excavators, 'a vase rivalling in size that associated with the much earlier "Heroon" burials' (Popham & Lemos 1995, 156). Indeed, pieces of a massive *krater* (no. 327) have been found in the central room of the 'Heroon', immediately south of the burial shaft. The 80cm high *krater* ('a monumental vase rivalled only by the Athenian Dipylon craters of the eighth century'[58]) had probably served as a grave marker before the building was eventually destroyed, filled, and covered with a large tumulus.

Although the 38cm high *krater* of Tomb 79A is much smaller and was most probably not used as a grave marker,[59] the persistent

[57] Popham and Lemos (1995) 156. An immense bibliography on the so-called 'Heroon' cannot be adduced here (see esp. Mazarakis Ainian 1997*a*, 48–57, with the bibliography quoted in his footnotes); suffice it to mention in this connection the publication of the building in *Lefkandi II.2* and of its pottery in *Lefkandi II.1* as well as a brief preliminary synthesis of the early excavations on site in Popham, Touloupa, and Sackett (1982*a*) 169–174. Recently, cf. Ridgway (1992) 17–18; Morris (2000) 195–256 (esp. 218–238), and Lemos (2002) 166–168. Cf. also Osborne (2004) 39–43 and Osborne (2009) 55–58.

[58] *Lefkandi II.1*, p. 25; cf. *ibidem*, p. 3, pp. 110–111 as well as pls. 17–18, 54–56.

[59] But cf. above, with n. 52.

importance of wine drinking for the lifestyle of the Protogeometric élites of Lefkandí, reflected by the local funerary rites, cannot be doubted. On a connected matter, it is worthwhile mentioning that sherds of *kraters* figured prominently in the MPG deposit from the fill of the Toumba 'Heroon'.[60] The excavators suggested that the massive *krater* could have been used for libations during the construction of the building.[61]

However we imagine the (practical and symbolic) function of this *krater* and of the *kraters* whose sherds were found in the fill of the tumulus, the very status of the honorand of the Toumba 'Heroon', no doubt unmatched by any other member of this community, must have precluded truly egalitarian wine drinking altogether. One may rather posit a vast redistributive feast, a ritual of apportioning and drinking wine from this *krater* involving all the active members of the local community, gathered to help build the huge edifice for their (late or still living) ruler. Functionally, these banquets most probably belonged to the category of 'patron-role feasting', permanently binding the members of the local community (or its élite) with, and subordinating them to, their leader. In later times, when the incumbents of the Toumba cemetery tried to tie themselves symbolically to the past greatness of the MPG 'hero' but could not aspire to his superior social position, the symbolic use they made of convivial pottery in their burials would rather imply 'empowering feasting', that is, feasts held by different members of the local élite striving for popularity and for support in their rivalry with their local peers.[62]

* * *

As argued above, the consecutive burials from Toumba do not supply evidence for the special symbolic (or socially defining) importance of convivial utensils that might point to the existence of the symposion properly speaking. Meanwhile, when following Euboean burial customs over a period of some 250 years (from the tenth century 'Heroon' of Lefkandí to the Pithekoussan, Kymean, and Eretrian cemeteries at the turn of the eighth and the seventh century BC), even allowing for clear divergences and fluctuations in the funerary habits

[60] In general, cf. Lemos (2002) 203.

[61] See e.g. Lemos (2002) 167. For the excavators' (well pondered) view of the sequence of events related to this burial, see *Lefkandi II.2*, esp. pp. 97–101. Subsequently, the issue has been heatedly debated by a number of scholars.

[62] Recently, cf. Kistler and Ulf (2005), on which see also below, p. 325.

we observed, we witness a momentous change that must have occurred at some point before the second half of the eighth century. To understand what must have happened in the meantime, after the period illuminated by the material from the Protogeometric necropolis of Toumba, we need to widen the scope of this enquiry to cover a larger geographic area. The best-documented region to provide us with the fullest archaeological sequence of comparative material will of course be Athens and Attica.[63] Besides, as we shall see shortly, there are good reasons to think that Athens played a decisive role in the development and spread of sympotic habits.

5.3 TOWARD A WIDER HISTORICAL CONTEXT: GEOMETRIC ATHENS AND THE AEGEAN

5.3.1 Monumental Wine Containers as Grave Markers in Geometric Athens

A priori, one aspect of Athenian mortuary customs related to wine drinking should lend itself to a sympotic interpretation of some kind. I am thinking here of the Geometric practice of using huge wine containers as grave markers in Athenian cemeteries.

Besides two amphoras located above the urns in two Late Protogeometric female graves (PG gr. 37 and 38; *c.*900 BC) in the Kerameikos,[64] not a single PG *krater* that might unambiguously be interpreted

[63] Despite the somewhat hypercritical remarks by Papadopoulos (1993) 176–181. For the unique importance of, and general problems posed by, the Geometric graves of the Kerameikos cemetery, see Hachmann (1963) esp. 47. On the detailed chronology of the Kerameikos burial plots, see in general Krause (1975) vol. I, *passim*. For a convenient list of conventional prefixes used to distinguish between different groups of graves yielded by the German excavations in the Kerameikos, see Morris (1987) ix and fig. 62 (p. 232); with figs 38–40 showing in some more detail the Protogeometric and Geometric graves from the Ag. Triada cemetery in the Kerameikos (prefixed, respectively, PG and G in what follows). In general, see *Kerameikos V.1*, pp. 6–42; cf. Kurtz & Boardman (1971) esp. 34–67. A brief outline of the regional development in burial customs in Attica during the 'Dark Age' can be found in Snodgrass (2000) 147–151; more general historical developments in Athens and Attica in Whitley (1991*a*) 54–74.

[64] For the amphora from gr. 37 (inv. 1074), see *Kerameikos IV*, pp. 14, 15, and 38 with pl. 33; for that from gr. 38 (inv. 1089), *Kerameikos IV*, pp. 15, 16–17, and 39 with pl. 9.

as originally serving as a funerary *sēma* has thus far been found in this necropolis.[65] The most spectacular development in the Early Geometric I and II (950–850 BC) Kerameikos is the appearance of monumental grave markers in the shape of specialized (mostly pedestalled) *kraters*, as well as belly-handled amphorae ('bha'), too large to be put to effective use in real-life activities.[66] However, in contrast with later stages of the Geometric period, *kraters* are extremely rare in our EG record at Kerameikos, which makes any attempts at positing long-term continuity in funerary rites extremely risky. With such reservations in mind, two isolated finds are nonetheless important. Two EG II *kraters* (G tombs 1 and 2) both had a rough stone stele placed above the cremation urns and were accompanied by large *kraters* as funerary *sēmata*.[67] One of the *kraters* (G gr. 2, from the burial plot south of Eridanos) had its bottom pierced to receive consecutive grave-cult libations.[68] In the MG I phase, there are two graves (G gr. 42 and 43) on the south bank of Eridanos, which were marked off by monumental pedestalled *kraters*.[69] However, slightly later, only a rough stone served as a grave-monument for yet another young warrior in the same burial plot (G gr. 13)[70]—so the custom was still far from uniform. During the MG II period, five male tombs received monumental *kraters* as their

[65] One possible *krater* of the kind (Agora P 7008; B 10) has been hypothetically suggested by Smithson (1961) 152. At the Nea Ionia burial plot, a rich cemetery from the second half of the tenth century a few kilometres to the north of the Kerameikos, the excavators found another *krater* (Nea Ionia no. 48 [inv. 18114], restored h. 46.8 cm) over the remains of the so-called Pyre A. See Smithson (1961) 150–155 and 167–168, with pl. 29; cf. Lemos (2002) 154.

[66] The Protogeometric female burial mentioned above (PG gr. 38) had an amphora suitable to be employed as an urn too, so the specialization of the grave markers was still non-existent. For the *kraters* on the Kerameikos cemetery in PG and Geometric periods, see in general Bohen (1997) 47–54.

[67] See, respectively, *Kerameikos V.1*, pp. 209–210 (gr. 1: *krater*, inv. 2133, from 'mid- till the third quarter of the tenth century', pl. 16) and 210–212 (gr. 2: *krater*, inv. 935, pl. 17).

[68] *Kerameikos V.1*, p. 211; cf. Coldstream (2003) 33 and 35; Morris (1987) 150. But cf. Kurtz & Boardman (1971) 57–58, for the suggestion that holes in the bottom (as well as in the vertical faces) of such vases might have been pierced in order to provide anchorage for the otherwise rather unstable vases (similarly, Boardman 1988, 176).

[69] Respectively, *Kerameikos V.1*, pp. 236–238 (gr. 42: foot of the *krater*, inv. 1187, pl. 18, upper left corner) and 238–239 (gr. 43: *krater*, inv. 1254, pl. 22; cf. p. 35). cf. Coldstream (2003) 61 and 62 (figs. 17g and 17h), for the impressive grave marker of the tomb G 43.

[70] *Kerameikos V.1*, esp. p. 218. See also Coldstream (2003) 56.

sēmata (the impressive pedestalled *krater* of gr. 22 survived almost intact).[71]

The Late Geometric period saw a sudden and multi-faceted change in Athenian funerary custom. Its most spectacular aspect was the sudden influx of monumental LG I and LG II grave markers, most of them in the Dipylon Cemetery.[72] The workshop of the so-called Dipylon Master (LG Ia, i.e. *c.*760–750 BC),[73] the first recognizable artistic individuality in the history of European fine arts, was responsible for at least 21 gigantic *sēmata*. Fourteen others date from the LG I period (including 7 vases by the LG Ib (*c.*750–735 BC) Hirschfeld Painter and his workshop).[74] Traditionally, these were belly-handled amphoras for women and huge pedestalled *kraters* for men. The generation of the Dipylon Master can also be credited with the invention of two other monumental shapes: a giant tall-necked *oinochoē* and a huge round-mouthed pitcher. However, by the LG IIb period (*c.*720–700 BC) the gigantic banqueting-linked grave markers were no longer in fashion,[75] although different forms of funerary *sēmata*, including medium-sized funerary amphorae and pitchers, become a widespread and almost indispensable element of adult male burials after *c.*700 BC.[76] It should be added that as far as monumental Geometric grave markers are concerned, Athens remained unparalleled in Attica for a long time.[77]

[71] *Kerameikos V.1*, pp. 222–224 (gr. 22: *krater*, inv. 290; pls. 20 and 21 above). cf. Coldstream (2003) 81, with fig. 23d (p. 76).

[72] In general, cf. still Brückner and Pernice (1893) esp. 74–100 (for the topography and development of the cemetery) and pp. 101–134 (for the list of the Dipylon graves); as well as Poulsen (1905) esp. 10–49 (for the history of Dipylon excavations and discoveries: pp. 10–16).

[73] For the Dipylon Master and his workshop, see Coldstream (2008) [1968], esp. 29–41.

[74] For the Hirschfeld Master and his workshop, see Coldstream (2008) [1968], esp. 41–44. See Figure. 5.2.

[75] In general, see Coldstream (2003) 109–119. On the 'Geometric elephantiasis' in general, see now Coldstream (2011).

[76] On the Protoattic grave markers, cf. e.g. Houby-Nielsen (1992) 358.

[77] Findings published from the Merenda and Anavyssos cemeteries have thus far not yielded EG and MG *sēmata* and only a few LG ones are reported (cf. Morris 1987, 152, with further references). Nevertheless, the last period of Late Geometric monumentalism witnessed a change in this pattern, most probably responding to the 'decentralisation of wealth in Attica', as J. N. Coldstream once called it (Coldstream 2003, 133). Accordingly, of the several monumental *kraters* reported from the thirties, only one, of unknown provenance, may conceivably have originated in Athens itself, whereas all the rest came from the countryside. Similarly, of the five large neck-handled amphorae of



Figure 5.2 LG Ib *krater* from the Hirschfeld Workshop (*c.*750–735 BC; H. 108.3 cm); The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1914 (14.130.14). Photo by Schecter Lee. Image © The Metropolitan Museum of Art

As we have already seen, the monumental convivial vessels used as grave markers are hardly an unprecedented phenomenon. It is also true that the ostentatious sympotic gigantism of Late Geometric *sēmata* was probably both a localized phenomenon (the

the Sub-Dipylon Workshop, only one comes surely from Athens; cf. Coldstream (2003) 133.

majority of its representatives were yielded by the 'Dipylon Cemetery', only three come from Kerameikos)[78] and a relatively brief one (*c.*760–720 BC), slightly exceeding the lifetime of a single generation. To interpret it as betokening the rise of the symposion would definitely be premature. At this stage, we must look for other and concurrent changes in Athenian burial customs. Nevertheless, one should bear in mind that the notion of a huge (but no longer gigantic) grave marker was subsequently more widely followed in Attica (and beyond) on a scale unprecedented in early Greek history. Thus the fleeting custom seems to point to a more permanent change in the symbolic self-definition of Athenian élites. Moreover, the initial peak of this vogue (LG Ia) is documented, as J. N. Coldstream aptly observed, by vessels commemorating 'a generation of men who had been in their prime during MG II' (Coldstream 2003, 135; cf. Coldstream 2011, 803). As we shall see, this particular epoch has a much more variegated story to tell us about Athenian drinking habits and their (hypothetical) symbolic expressions.

5.3.2 Athenian Grave Goods of the Geometric Period and the Emergence of the Symposion

Two crucial aspects of the 'social persona' of the Attic élites, horse-rearing (by extension, cavalry warfare) and the abundant storage of crops (by implication, extensive landownership), already found peculiar symbolic expressions in EG and MG Athenian burials. On the one hand, the 'Pferdpyxis', a specialized type of terracotta box (*pyxis*) crowned with up to four figurines of horses (see Figure 5.3), was popular in Athens between *c.*800 and *c.*750 BC.[79] On the other

[78] Tombs G 25 (*Kerameikos V.1*, p. 226: amphora, inv. 1214; pl. 49), G 26 (*Kerameikos V.1*, p. 227: *krater*, inv. 1255; pl. 23), and hS 290 (Vierneisel 1964, cols. 462 and 467 as well as Vierneisel 1963, 29–30 with pl. 29 a–b), all from the Ay. Triada cemetery. In general, however, cf. the caveats by Boardman (1988) 174 n. 6, as far as the documented number of Geometric *sēmata* is concerned.

[79] See in general *Kerameikos XIII*, pp. 8–12 and *passim*. Cf. Bohen (1997) 46–47. An isolated object of this kind is dated as early as *c.*900 BC (see Young 1949, 284–285 with pl. 67.3 and fig. 3.). The prestigious importance of the horse models on *pyxides* seems to be a specifically Athenian phenomenon. All the MG finds come from Athenian burials (perhaps 43 in total) and the same holds true for the overwhelming majority from the LG objects. For the relevant statistic, see *Kerameikos XIII*, Appendix II (pp. 128–130).



Figure 5.3 LG horse-*pyxis* (total H. 19.5 cm), The Agora Museum, inv. P. 4783 (<http://www.agathe.gr>, Image: 2008.03.0177). Watercolour by Piet de Jong, photo Craig Mauzy. Courtesy of The American School of Classical Studies at Athens: Agora Excavations

hand, terracotta models of granaries (single or multiple silos), sometimes also found on the lids of *pyxides*, occur in a number of Athenian graves between *c.*850 and *c.*700 BC (see Figure 5.4).[80]

One more class of symbolically meaningful objects figures prominently on the lids of Attic Geometric vases, namely vases themselves. In a peculiar 'mirror game', these models may reflect the shape of the main vessel. It is worth noting that not only large wine containers, but also *pyxides* are sometimes given drinking vessels as knobs on their lids (see Figure 5.5). This is particularly notable in our material from

[80] For the earliest such objects, from the famous burial of a 'rich Athenian lady' from the Areopagus (recently see Coldstream 1995), see Smithson (1968) 93–94 with pl. 23 and 94–97 with pls. 24–27. But cf. Kurtz and Boardman (1971) 63–64, voicing some *caveats* regarding their identification as 'granaries'.



Figure 5.4 EG II *pyxis* with five granary models on lid (*c.*850 BC; total H. 25.3 cm), The Agora Museum, inv. P 27646 (<http://www.agathe.gr>, Image: 2000.02.0202). Courtesy of The American School of Classical Studies at Athens: Agora Excavations

the MG II and LG periods.[81] Unlike the case of ordinary lid-knobs, but much in the vein of the 'Pferdpyxiden', the dimensions of these miniature vases almost always seem to exceed the practical size for

[81] See e.g. an Attic MG II globular *pyxis* ('but probably designed as a krater'; thus Coldstream 1983*a*, 204) crowned with an *oinochoē* (Louvre, inv. A 514), cf. *CVA* Louvre XVI, pls. 3,1–2 (entire vessel), and 4,1–2 (lid); an Attic MG II *krater* with an *oinochoē* on the lid, from the North Cemetery in Knossos (KMF (i.e. found in the burial plot on the site of the Knossos Medical Faculty of the University of Crete) gr. no. 219, nos. 42 and 32 (lid)), now published in *KNC I*, pp. 215–216 with pl. 202 (for a brief commentary, see *KNC II*, p. 398–399); an Attic MG II or LG *hydria* with a 'mirrored' miniature *hydria* on its lid (*c.*750 BC): *CVA* München III, pl. 114,1–2 (vessel with lid), pl. 104,4 (lid); cf. ibid., pp. 14–15 (for commentary); an Attic LG *pyxis* lid with a *skyphos* (*c.*750–725 BC), from gr. N 21:6 (no. 3; P 14818) in the Agora, cf. Brann (1960) 412–413 with pl. 91,3; and an Attic LG bowl with a lid-with-a-*skyphos* (*c.*750–725 BC): *CVA* München III, pl. 105 (vessel with lid), pl. 104,3 (lid); cf. ibid., pp. 9–10 (for commentary, with some more *comparanda* adduced). Coldstream (1983*a*) n. 21 (p. 204) tentatively suggests one more example of this class of vessels with miniature vases, the 'vast pitcher Stockholm 1704 from the Dipylon workshop'.



Figure 5.5 MG II *pyxis* lid in the shape of a *skyphos* (H. 17 cm); The Agora Museum, inv. P 14818 (<http://www.agathe.gr>, Image: 2008.03.0148). Watercolour by Piet de Jong, photo Craig Mauzy. Courtesy of The American School of Classical Studies at Athens: Agora Excavations

such a handle. Given their meticulous execution, this fact suggests that the rationale for such models was primarily symbolic.[82] Perhaps the most famous representative of this class of objects was excavated in Kourion on Cyprus (New York Metropolitan Museum, inv. 74.51.965)[83]—a monumental Euboean LG ovoid *krater* (*c.*750 BC; H. 114.91 cm) surmounted by a small *hydria* on its lid by the Cesnola Painter, clearly working under the influence of Athenian workshops (see Figure 5.6). The majority of such items come from MG II Athens, but the Athenian predilection for miniature vases embellishing the covers of larger vessels is matched by a similar fondness later in Knossos.[84]

[82] *Pace* Brann (1960) 413, who surmised that 'Those lid pots which had actual capacity may have been used for an extra offering'.

[83] Cf. Coldstream (2008) [1968], 172 with pl. 35 and Coldstream (2003) 192 with fig. 61c (p. 193). For the Cesnola painter, see in particular Coldstream (2003) 192 and below, p. 292 and n. 130.

[84] See e.g. Early Orientalizing four-handled tripod *pithoi*, esp. Fortetsa no. 988 (from gr. II 15, pl. 63 and p. 92: miniature amphora-knob); no. 1047 (gr. II 24, pl. 63



Figure 5.6 LG Euboean *krater* with lid in the shape of a small hydria, by the Cesnola Painter (*c.*750–740 BC; H. 114.9 cm); The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Cesnola Collection, Purchased by subscription, 1874–76 (74.51.965). Image © The Metropolitan Museum of Art

With reference to the beautiful MG II globular *pyxis* (*krater*?) from the 'Dipylon Cemetery' excavations in 1813 (now in the Louvre, inv. A 514), J. N. Coldstream noted: 'The miniature oinochoe on its lid alludes to its original function at the aristocratic symposium' (Coldstream 1983*a*, 204).[85] I would take this vase not only as an 'allusion to' the symposion, but as yet another example of strong élite symbolism analogous to the model granaries and to the 'Pferdpyxiden'. The symbolism of landownership, agricultural wealth, and that of a 'knightly' social group excelling in horse-rearing and mounted warfare is now completed by yet another status-marker—wine drinking as a preferred pastime of Athenian élites. This new means of symbolic expression would hardly be surprising, given the growing importance (and size) of the monumental convivial vases employed as grave *sēmata* in the course of the Geometric epoch.

Before going any further, it is necessary to obtain a more general perspective on the share and role of assemblages of convivial pottery in the whole bulk of grave offerings in Athenian burials of this period.

In a paper reassessing the merits of a theory (to which we shall shortly return) of Sanne Houby-Nielsen, who advanced a general interpretation of Kerameikos burial customs in ideological terms,[86] M.-P. Belletier provided a valuable statistical analysis of grave goods of the Geometric through the archaic period (*c.*900 to *c.*480 BC).[87] It is worth summarizing this statistical data here.[88] In the period between 900 BC and 850 BC, the most important class of prestigious items

and p. 95: miniature amphora-knob); no. 1366 (gr. P 63 [LXIV], pl. 85 with pp. 118–119: hollow *pyxis* knob); as well as Late Orientalizing polychrome *pithos* (Fortetsa no. 1194, gr. P *H* [XXXI], pl. 91 and p. 103: miniature bowl with vertical ring handles); see also LO Fortetsa nos. 937, 941, 956, and 968 (all from gr. II), for similar models surmounting Knossian vessels. For the full list of such vases (22 lids in total), see the catalogue in *Fortetsa*, pp. 164–165. Cf. also *Kerameikos XIII*, p. 19.

[85] By the term 'symposion' he most probably meant what some scholars refer to as 'heroic banquet' (although see also Coldstream 1983*a*, 205), as it is clear from Coldstream (1998*b*) esp. 308—310 (cf. also Ridgway 1992, 149). For the so-called 'heroic (or 'Homeric') banquets' in eighth-century Greece, see below, pp. 283–285. Because this MG II grave marker, unlike its LG descendants, is not too large to be used in everyday life, Coldstream posits its previous employment in real-life banquets. This is possible, but does not affect my argument about the symbolic meaning of such miniature vases as the *oinochoē* on the lid of the Louvre *pyxis*.

[86] Houby-Nielsen (1992) 343–374, esp. 360–364.

[87] Belletier (2003) 71–82, with table on pp. 76–77 and figs. 1–2.

[88] Note that the average rate of items per grave is relatively stable within the period under scrutiny (fluctuating between 4.5 and 5.76 objects per grave).

found in Kerameikos interments are diverse metal objects (weapons, tools, metal vases, jewellery, etc.).[89] Pottery constitutes no more than 25 per cent of the finds (which is more or less the same proportion as later in the sixth century BC). However, between 850 BC and 800 BC the share of tableware rises to 40 per cent of the total of grave goods, soaring as high as 70 per cent in the eighth and seventh centuries. The spectacular upsurge in pottery in Kerameikos burials begins with the Middle Geometric II epoch and grows at an even quicker pace thereafter. Drinking vases, particularly *skyphoi* and other types of drinking cups clearly dominate the picture during this period, with a much smaller share of findings represented by pouring vessels ('vases à verser'), such as *oinochoai*.[90] The majority of these grave goods are then less likely to play the role of containers for food and drink given to the deceased. Their purely symbolic function seems far more important to the families of the dead.

Another interesting phenomenon can be observed in connection with the growing share of banqueting vessels amongst grave goods during the Geometric period in Athens. In the Protogeometric, drinking vases can be found both in male and in female burials, and there is no shape reserved for one gender only. However, a certain pattern seems to emerge in the Geometric period. Whereas drinking cups are still buried indiscriminately (and in increasing abundance, as we have seen above) with men and women, *kantharoi* appear four times more often and *oinochoai* at least twice as often in male interments than in those of females.[91] Thus, both shapes can be used as sex-indicating objects for male burials.[92] This case of gender differentiation or specialization in the use of convivial vessels as grave offerings would best be explained in symbolic terms as pointing to the growing importance of wine drinking as a tool of self-definition for the Athenian élite. Of course, we must not forget that symbolically laden prestigious objects deposited with the deceased are more likely to mark him

[89] In general, see *Kerameikos V.1*, pp. 183–207. cf. Müller-Karpe (1962) 59–129, esp. pp. 62–67 and (for the chronology and the historical context of the finds) 76–82, with figs. 33–34.

[90] At times, drinking vessels form the only class of items found in poorer burials, but this is not to be overrated as such pots were simply cheaper and easier to obtain.

[91] For *kantharoi* in this context, see Coldstream (2003) 76–77. For Attic *kantharoi* in their possible relationship with the symposion, see below, pp. 287–288.

[92] In general, see Strömberg (1993) 52–78. For the lack of gender-specific grave goods in Protogeometric Athens, cf. also Lemos (2002) 55–57 and 189–190.

or her off as a member of a family group or of some wider community than as an individual, thereby serving not so much to define his or her gender and individual status but rather to build and uphold the authority of the group by symbolic means.[93] This was clearly the case of the 'sympotic patterns' we observed in the San Montano cemetery in Pithekoussai, where women and subadults were also given the 'sympotic pair' consisting of an *oinochoē* and drinking cup.

The symbolic 'burial language' of Athenian necropolises was different,[94] but here too some clear 'convivial patterns' seem to emerge. Furthermore, unlike in Pithekoussai and the wider Euboean framework, in Athens we can detect a series of continuous changes in funerary custom over time. One fundamental change is of special importance here. I have already mentioned the dominant position of metal grave offerings in Athens before *c.*850 BC. Now, around 800 BC, the most important class of such items, so-called 'occupational' grave goods such as weapons and specialized tools, suddenly diminishes to the point of disappearing from Athenian burials within some two generations.[95] Since weapons are the most spectacular and socially perhaps the most meaningful of all the prestigious items put into graves, this curious phenomenon needs explanation and is usually explained as betokening the growing feeling of security and stability among the Athenians.[96] This common-sense explanation may not be entirely wrong, but it surely oversimplifies the matter. One would rather be tempted to link it with the contemporaneous quantitative rise of convivial pottery in the Athenian funerary record and interpret the disappearance of 'occupational grave goods', including weapons, not in terms of the real-life concerns of the Athenians, but as reflecting changing ideologies of the Athenian élites.

Indeed, in her paper dealing with the ideology of the Athenian élites as reflected by changing mortuary habits at the Kerameikos

[93] Cf. Strömberg (1993) 109.

[94] I use here an apt term coined by Houby-Nielsen (1995). In general, cf. D'Onofrio (1993).

[95] Snodgrass (2000) 144 with n. 4 (p. 198). cf. Hachmann (1963) 53 and 55. To be more precise, weapons completely disappear from the LG II graves, whose number rises spectacularly. In MG II and LG I the number of such items drops dramatically compared to EG and MG I epochs. It is meaningful that the symbolic use of armour in this context also becomes extremely scarce: only one Geometric *pyxis* is covered by a terracotta lid in the shape of a shield (no. 18 in the inventory compiled in *Kerameikos XIII*).

[96] Thus e.g. Bohen (1997) 49.

cemetery,[97] S. Houby-Nielsen observed that 'The appearance of a reference to a banquet service in offering-trenches in the Protoattic period the breaking and burning of which replaced the breaking and burning of weapons in the Early-Middle Geometric period can also be described as a shift from warrior-ideology to banquet ideology at male banquets' (Houby-Nielsen 1992, 360). Her historical signpost for this ideological switch seems to be related to the emergence of the poorly preserved offering-trenches (German *Opferrinnen*)[98] and deposits believed to stem from offering-trenches of the LG period.[99] S. Houby-Nielsen tried to associate this ideological shift with the (hypothetical) heroic ideals of the Athenian élite. According to her, the 'using up of property' or the massive destruction of a banquet service, smashed and burnt on specialized pyres to be deposited in the offering-trenches (instead of weapons and jewellery) 'was intimately linked with ideas of past heroic *mnema*, which demonstrated the status of the dead hero and his family' (Houby-Nielsen 1992, 355).[100]

These contentions should make us wonder what type of banquet played so prominent a role in the ideological self-definition of the Athenian élites we have been scrutinizing. Was it the (historical or just imaginary) heroic banquet, as the majority of scholars would most probably assert? Or was it the symposion properly speaking?

It must be said that the traditional scholarly conception of the Geometric (and early archaic) ideology of the heroic (at times even openly termed 'Homeric')[101] banquet is grounded in the unforgettable scenes of burial (and reminiscences of conspicuous burials and tombs) in the Homeric poems, along with the specialized iconography of large funerary vessels of the period (which feature prestigious scenes of lying in state, mass mourning, processions of chariots and armed warriors, and deadly battles), and finally the comparative material from 'princely' tombs of the coeval élites in Phrygia, Cyprus, and Italy.[102]

[97] Houby-Nielsen (1992) esp. 360–364.

[98] Houby-Nielsen (1992) 347–351. In general, see Kistler (1998) *passim* (with pp. 20–30, for an overview of the earlier scholarship).

[99] Cf. Krause (1975) 132–135; cf. already *Kerameikos V.1*, esp. pp. 30–33.

[100] In general, see Houby-Nielsen (1992) 351–357.

[101] See e.g. Rathje (1990) 279–288.

[102] See also Crielaard (1996) esp. 131–132 with nn. 85 and 86, for the 'common high-status funerary behaviour' of the Cypriot 'royal' tombs in their Mediterranean context. For the 'royal' tomb I at Salamis, Cyprus, cf. also below, pp. 294–295.

I think there are good reasons not to be content with this traditional view, as ingeniously elaborated by S. Houby-Nielsen. First, we must bear in mind the fact that it may not be by chance that we do not have actual 'princely' or 'heroic' burials in Athens belonging to this period. True, Athenian élites or at least their most outstanding members might have believed in some (family) connection with the heroes, both those locally venerated in the countryside and those sung by epic poets.[103] Most certainly, martial and, in particular, cavalry ideals played a crucial role in the self-presentation of these élites, easily lending themselves to heroic associations. All this obviously found its way into funerary iconography and perhaps into actual funerary ritual, too.[104] However, this is not enough to imply the existence of a specialized and socially operative, so to speak, ideology of heroic burial, let alone of the actual banqueting *à la héroïque*. It is enough to reflect here on the inscription of 'Cup of Nestor', wherein, as Oswyn Murray brilliantly observed, the most important point of the joyful epigram is exactly the humorous tension between the actual symposion, its atmosphere and its accompanying pleasures, and the heroic banquet of old, as incarnated by the character of Nestor.[105] In a word, it is a priori more probable than not that the Late Geometric Athenians were equally able to cherish their heroic ideals (or memories, if you wish) and enjoy their symposia, properly speaking, at the same time. It is better to suspend judgement and not to accept the historicity of the 'heroic' or 'Homeric' banquet in eighth-century Athens, before we find its unambiguous reflection in Athenian funerary custom.

Now, what is truly striking is the shift observed by Houby-Nielsen in the manner of the ritual destruction of one's property. When taken into consideration with the aforementioned decline and disappearance of 'occupational items' (including weapons) from burials, the growing insistence on convivial symbols in Athenian funerary custom ought to be interpreted as pointing to the advancement of a new type

[103] The two categories of heroes would best be kept apart (it is the anachronistic merging of the two that severely obfuscates the study of the origins and of the development of the hero cult in Greece); I hope to deal with this important issue elsewhere. Cf. the recent excellent treatment of the problem in Bremmer (2006) 17–20. In general, cf. Antonaccio (1995) and Mazarakis Ainian (1999).

[104] Cf. above, p. 265 with n. 46.

[105] If we accept the identification of the Pithekoussan Nestor with the epic character. See above, pp. 129–133.

of banquet in the lifestyle of local élites. After all, the most salient and memorable feature of the Homeric banquets is large quantities of roasted meat being devoured by warlike heroes.[106] What one would expect to find in grave-good materials symbolically associated with this manner of feasting are obviously large bronze cauldrons (and generally metal vessels), as well as iron firedogs and spits.[107] And this is exactly what becomes rare in the Athenian tombs after *c.*800 BC and virtually absent from *c.*720 BC onwards. To put it briefly, I cannot see any incontrovertible trace of the ideology of the 'heroic banquet' in MG and LG Athenian funerals. Conversely, we have some excellent indications of sophisticated drinking habits, implying the existence of the symposion in the archaeological record from Athens in the same period.

* * *

I would argue that the MG II period witnessed the advent of specialized sympotic vase shapes specifically designed to entertain diners.

For a long time, one type of such vessels remained rather mysterious. The period of its popularity, between *c.*800 and *c.*700 BC, corresponds well to the epoch of ideological ferment reflected by the aforementioned new symbolic phenomena visible in Athenian mortuary material. Evangelie Simantoni-Bournia, to whom I am particularly indebted for sharing her work with me, reassessed the type of vessels she called 'multi-storeyed vases', by which she means 'items that give the impression of being composed of more than one vessel of the same shape stacked vertically, one on top of the other, but having inside a continuous cavity that extends throughout the vase' (Simantoni-Bournia 2011, 972). She thinks that the main point of such vases was 'practical jokes', featuring a diner who, deceived by the potter's trick, would try to lift a whole pile of *skyphoi* instead of lifting just the uppermost one. I would like to suggest another and complementary explanation of the function of such vessels. As we remember, the sympotic game of 'sport drinking' consisted in competitive drinking of large amounts of wine at one draught and involved specialized cups (big, heavy, of large perimeter), deliberately designed as unsuitable or difficult for drinking without inelegantly spilling one's wine but also difficult to put aside when full of wine. I would tentatively

[106] See above, pp. 193–194 with n. 9.
[107] In general, cf. e.g. Crielaard (1996) 132–133 with n. 88.



Figure 5.7 MG II Attic double *skyphos*-strainer (second quarter of the eighth century BC; H. 11 cm); Paris, Louvre, inv. CA 1736. Drawing A. Filipowska (after *CVA* Louvre XVI, pl. 12,3). Courtesy of A. Filipowska

put forward the hypothesis that the large-capacity 'multi-storeyed' Geometric vessels (often representing stacked drinking cups or tankards),[108] were employed in Geometric Athens for something like ritual *polyposia*, just as larger *kylikes* (or other drinking cups) were in later times (see Figure 5.7). The subtle sympotic ceremony, contemporaneously evidenced by the Pithekoussan 'Cup of Nestor', would thus be highly developed not only in its literary or cultural aspect, but in drinking habits as well. And 'multi-storeyed' vases would therefore form such a convenient *pars pro toto* of the symposion that they found their way to the symbolically laden prestigious grave offerings. From this point of view, miniatures of such pots are understandably found in non-adult burials.

[108] Out of the 37 eighth-century specimens listed by E. Simantoni-Bournia in her catalogue, six are superimposed miniature tankards (all from Athens and Attica), twelve are full-shaped *skyphoi* (three non-Attic, all of which LG), three more are fully-shaped *aryballoi* (one non-Attic), and 16 are miniature jugs-*lekythoi* (all but one are non-Attic). In total, among the Attic multi-storeyed vases, we have fifteen drinking cups as against two other shapes. Outside Athens, on the other hand, a peculiar predilection for the jugs-*lekythoi* can be seen in Crete.

Another type of vessel is worth mentioning in this context. Alongside the leading shapes of open vases (*kraters*, *skyphoi*, and mugs or tankards among the drinking vases), a new and spectacular shape makes its first appearance in MG II: the *kantharos* with high strap handles. One of the first Attic specimens was yielded by a male cremation in Kerameikos (gr. 69).[109] As already mentioned, such vases are not usually found in female burials or in a domestic context, so they must have had a strong symbolic link to men. Since this vessel is an emblematically Dionysian prop from the sixth century BC onwards,[110] J. N. Coldstream tentatively suggested that similar associations for the *kantharos* already existed in the eighth century, given the fact that *c.*750 BC one Attic *kantharos* (Keos K 4365) found its way into an offering to the sanctuary of Dionysus on Keos (Aya Irini).[111] But even without its hypothetical Dionysian associations, a possible link between this Geometric vessel and the symposion can be posited based on the conceivable functions of its two high strap handles. It should be observed that such handles make drinking from this vessel particularly inconvenient (cf. Figure 5.8). I would tentatively suggest a link between a practical function for this vessel and that of the 'multi-storeyed' *skyphoi* and tankards. In both cases, Athenian potters did their best to please their patrons with new and extravagant vessels designed to embellish élite-drinking occasions. The new shapes are less suited to convenient drinking, which was precisely the point. Their goal was to amuse the drinkers not only by the traditional means of elaborated ornament, but also thanks to their wild shapes, which required skill and experience if they were to be used in an elegant manner.[112] Although many crucial developments in this respect were still to come, the material side of Athenian conviviality

[109] Cf. Coldstream (2003) 75–76 with fig. 23b.

[110] In general, cf. Isler-Kerényi (2007) Index, *s.v.* 'cup, kylix'.

[111] Coldstream (2003) 756. A fragmentary 'Dionysus-amphora' from Melos, which represents Dionysus with a *kantharos* and accompanied by a female figure (Ariadne or a maenad?), is probably to be dated to the last decade of the seventh century BC (see Papastamos 1970, 55–58 with Tab. 10–11; p. 129 for dating; the earliest amphorae of this group date to the second quarter of the seventh century). In all likelihood, it was used in a highly symbolic funerary context. This vessel seems to support the idea of an early Dionysian symbolism for the *kantharos*.

[112] Cf. Osborne (2007) 36–37, on 'the potential embarrassment of the drinker unable to handle a large and deep or tall-footed cup', as well as other potential embarrassments due to unusual features intentionally created by potters in the late archaic and classical periods. In general, see above, pp. 42–44.



Figure 5.8 LG *kantharos* (total H. 16.8 cm); The Agora Museum, inv. 15124 (<http://www.agathe.gr>, Image: 2008.03.0159). Watercolour by Piet de Jong, photo Craig Mauzy. Courtesy of The American School of Classical Studies at Athens: Agora Excavations

was already exceptionally sophisticated in the MG II epoch, at the very beginning of the eighth century BC.

But there is more about the *kantharos*. Unlike the traditional shapes of drinking vessels, usually equipped with small horizontal handles, the MG II high strap handles made this new cup perfectly suited to being passed around from one diner to another.[113] This, I would argue, is yet another hint of the custom of drinking *epidexia* by the first half of the eighth century BC—a custom otherwise well known to Homer.

5.3.3 The Early Symposion and Archaeology in the Aegean

To understand the origins of the symposion, archaeological traces of which proved detectable in eighth-century Euboean *koinē* and in

[113] Independently from my own reasoning on the matter, Jan Paul Crielaard suggested such an interpretation to me *per litteras*.

eighth-century Athens, we must once again widen the geographical scope of this inquiry. I shall do so progressively. In the next section, I will deal with the possible implications of J. N. Coldstream's interpretation of the Athenian MG II drinking sets found in many corners of the Mediterranean as indicative of the practice of gift exchange between noble families (Coldstream 1983*a*). In this section, I remain focused on the Aegean.

Coldstream mentions a striking find from gr. no. 219 (KMF burial plot) in the North Cemetery in Knossos.[114] This rich chamber tomb, cleared out around 800 BC and used for several generations by a noble group (whose members were buried, among other things, with iron weapons as well as iron spits and firedogs), yielded 'a homogeneous set of imported Attic vases, all MG II' (Coldstream 1983*a*, 204): a large flat *pyxis* (one of the biggest of that shape known so far, and a 'Pferdpyxis' at that),[115] a low-footed *krater* with a lid surmounted by a miniature *oinochoē*,[116] and a huge belly-handled amphora (KMF no. 219.33; H. 104 cm). Coldstream surmised that all these vases might have been produced in the same Attic workshop.[117]

Coldstream considered that the Knossos drinking set could not have been offered to the local noblemen for funerary use only. These highly regarded gifts must have been used during their élite banquets.[118] Whether designed to become a funerary *sēma* or not, it belongs to a drinking set travelling (from the same workshop?) to Knossos in this capacity. Drinking sets of this kind should be viewed as prestigious symbolic items, even if their use during actual banquets earlier in Athens or at their final destination in Crete or elsewhere is uncertain.[119] Incidentally, if we rely on Homeric usage, one would rather expect that gifts

[114] Now published in *KNC I*, p. 210-224, with relevant plates (in *KNC IV*) and figures (in *KNC III*).

[115] KMF no. 219.23 (for the body) and 59 (for the fragmentary lid).

[116] KMF no. 219.42 (body) and 32 (lid); H. 37 cm. Cf. above, n. 81.

[117] Coldstream (1983*a*) 205 with n. 26; cf. *KNC I*, p. 215.

[118] Cf. above, n. 85. I have my doubts here. While still in Athens, the aforementioned 104 cm tall amphora from Knossos would be suitable as a conspicuous grave marker. Moreover, it is hard to imagine such an enormous and precious vessel being safely used when full of liquid during a banquet. Nevertheless, I think that this is of minor importance.

[119] It is worthwhile to note that the symbolic meaning of these sets is further confirmed by the presence of a 'Pferdpyxis' in the Knossian assemblage (see above, n. 115). Clearly, in some respects the 'symbolic language' of this élite followed Athenian idiom (cf. also above, p. 272 and n. 84).

exchanged between élite members would not be put to everyday use, but kept in safe possession till the next occasion of prestigious gift exchange.[120]

The question we should ask ourselves here is whether the phenomenon of Athenian MG II drinking sets offered as prestigious gifts abroad is to be held as indicative of the birth of the symposion or even of its actual spread among the Greek élites who were recipients of such offerings. There is a serious argument against this contention. Such (more or less) homogeneous sets of drinking vases are attested in Crete much earlier than our oldest conceivable archaeological testimonies to the symposion. For instance, this is the case with the reused Late Bronze Age *tholos* tomb at Tekke near Knossos (Teke tomb J of *c.*900 BC). It yielded a set of Attic Late PG drinking vases;[121] whereas another grave in this site (Teke tomb G) produced a consistent MG I set of the same kind.[122] Consequently, one could posit a privileged relationship between some members of the Athenian and Knossian élites well before the MG II period.[123] Also, as we remember, in the Toumba cemetery in Lefkandí, Athenian EG II and MG I imported drinking vessels add to the local drinking sets in quite substantial quantities.[124]

All such cases should sensitize us to the possible durability of traditional forms of contacts between the élites in diverse corners of the Aegean. Given the importance of ceremonial wine drinking in

[120] As the epithets 'not exposed to fire, brand new' (thus *LSJ*[9]): ἄπυρος (e.g. *Il.* IX 122; XXIII 267; 885) or ἀπύρωτος (*Il.* XXIII 270), regularly used in Homer for bronze cauldrons and other prestigious metal vessels offered as noble gifts or prizes, clearly indicate (in general, cf. Valenza Mele 1982, esp. 11–114). Cf. also the case of the silver *krater* made by Hephaestus and most probably kept in safe storage to be exchanged several times between characters of the *Odyssey* (IV 615–619; XV 103–104 and 114–123); cf. above, pp. 217–218 with n. 126.

[121] Namely nos. J 8 (*oinochoē*), J 23 (shoulder-handled *amphoriskos*), J 56 (*kantharos*), J 15, 22, and 50 (high-footed *skyphoi*), J 27, 34, 36, 40, 42, 44, 45 (high-conical-footed cups), and J 28–30, 32–33, 39, 41, 43, 47–49 (flat-base cups). See *KNC I*, p. 25–30 (with relevant plates and figures in *KNC IV* and *KNC III*); Cf. above the Knossian gr. KMF 285 (*KNC I*, p. 247), with a MPG bell-*krater* (no. 285.82) containing 13 drinking cups and six *oinochoai* (nos. 285.91–109). cf. Osborne (2009) 64: '[the assemblage] suggesting substantial farewell parties held for more than just the narrow family group'.

[122] Namely nos. G 3 and G 83 (belly-handled amphorae), G 18, 19, 95 (*oinochoai*), G 22, 96 (smaller *oinochoai*), and G 69–76 (flat-base cups). See *KNC I*, pp. 9–22 (with relevant plates and figures). cf. Coldstream (2003) 383.

[123] Cf. briefly Coldstream (2003) 382.

[124] See also Coldstream (2003) 63–64 (with fig. 18).

prestigious display already in the Protogeometric period, we should not be surprised by the fact that in the archaeological record such older phenomena may be mixed up with the new forms of élite ostentation that one could conceivably link with the origins of the symposion. Isolated cases of the kind are not likely to contribute to our general view of the origins of the symposion. Once again, what we need is a convergence of a series of meaningful phenomena to this effect.

Indeed, the picture we get from the Aegean in the MG II period looks revealing enough. It is then that the thus far isolated cases of grave gifts involving Attic 'drinking sets' give way to a more general tendency. An Attic MG II 'dinner set' was found in Eretria (on the élite burial plot at Odos Arist. Eratonymou): a *krater*, *krateriskos*, *oinochoē*, *skyphos*, *pyxis*, and an 'antique' MG I amphora. This assemblage may have been the result of a relationship with Athenian nobles or perhaps originated from a local effort to collect a decent Attic drinking set for a prestigious burial. And more or less homogeneous MG II sets of the kind, also of local pottery, seem to emerge in many corners of the Aegean, from Thessaly to Rhodes.[125]

This being the case, it may not be due to pure chance that the earliest votives at the Samian Heraion present a quite consistent pattern, prominently featuring MG Atticizing *skyphoi* and pedestalled *kraters*.[126] The sanctuary did not seem to attract a large number of

[125] See e.g. Coldstream (2003) 378: Tragana in eastern Locris facing northern Euboea ('One suspects the agency of a Euboean entrepreneur')—MG II *pithos* gr. no. 9 [*ΠΙ*–9], a young woman with 53 bronze items, two painted vessels (a footed *krater* and a late psc *skyphos*: mid eighth century BC), a lot of jewellery, two bronze *phialai* including a North Syrian *phialē mesomphalos* with a hieroglyphic-syllabic Neo-Hittite inscription of a certain Muwezi (Mu-wa-zi-sa). See Onasoglou (1981) esp. 14–21 (with Pl. 11 *α*–*γ*, for the painted vases, and Pl. 21, for the inscribed *phialē*). Cf. *AD* 41 (1986) B (*Chronika*), p. 74b; and esp. *AD* 42 (1987) B1 (Chronika), pp. 235–238 as well as *BCH* 108 (1984), p. 782 ('Chronique des fouilles en 1983', by G. Touchais). On the wider historical context of eighth-century burial customs in eastern Locris, see Morris (1998) 380–381. Coldstream (2003), 380–381: Vathi in southern Rhodes—two rich MG graves: a woman with over 30 vessels and gold jewellery and 'a warrior with a large pedestalled krater and iron weapons'. Cf. Coldstream (2003) 87: a series of MG through LG Atticizing *kraters* in a *tholos* tomb with continuous inhumations suggesting a family group, in Kapakli near Iolcos (cf. also Coldstream 2003, 206–207). In all these cases, the new emphasis on wine-drinking equipment is naturally combined with earlier local funerary idioms, so no direct equation of those burial customs with the Athenian or Pithecussan ones is possible.

[126] Cf. *Samos V*, pp. 14–31 and 85– 86, with e.g. nos. 22 (Pl. 5) and 100–101 (Pl. 17): 'Fundgruppen' VIII, X, and XI, dating from just before the construction of the

Greek foreigners at the time,[127] so we may surmise that local worshippers felt they should venerate the goddess with reference to one of the most prestigious 'symbolic idioms' they could envision—the sympotic one, in much the same way as their respective local counterparts and pilgrims would customarily deposit bronze tripod cauldrons and bronze figurines, notably of horses, at contemporaneous Olympia and Delphi, or tripods and weapons at coeval Isthmia.

* * *

Scholars sometimes refer to a brief 'MG Attic (ceramic) *koinē*' in the Aegean, a short period of predominance by fine Attic pottery beginning in the mid ninth century. During this period, Attic pottery spread far beyond its earlier EG sphere of influence (Argolid, Corinthia, and Boeotia) to cover the Cyclades as well as Samos and Miletus farther to the east, then embraced central Crete, Euboea, and Thessaly by *c.*800 BC, and ultimately Rhodes around 780 BC, 'by which time some aspects of the MG II style had been accepted as a *koinē* by almost every major centre in the Aegean' (Coldstream 2003, 103).[128] This cultural *koinē* did not survive the transition to the LG period, 'giving place to a plethora of independent local styles—a symptom of the growth and consolidation of autonomous city-states, each one proud of its own way of doing things' (Coldstream 2003, 385).[129] At the same time, the export of Attic *kraters* and large vases ceases, and so does the Athenian gift exchange with the Cypriot élites. In this capacity, Athenians are replaced by the Euboeans, as the famous imports from Kourion (including the Cesnola *krater* adduced above)[130] and Amathous (more recent) demonstrate.[131]

Hekatompedon I at the turn of ninth and eighth century BC; cf. Coldstream (2003) 95 and 97. Thereafter, deposits containing mainly *kraters*, cups, and tankards will be typical, but earlier deposits on the spot (belonging to the 'Fundgruppen' II and IV), present a very different pattern: they have several *kraters*, several amphorae/*hydriae* and just a few drinking cups (see *Samos V*, esp. p. 14–23 and 85). For ritual meals in this sanctuary in the archaic period, cf. in general Kron (1988).

[127] Cf. e.g. Osborne (2009) 87.

[128] See in general Coldstream (2003) 102–103 and 384–385.

[129] Cf. Coldstream (1983*b*). For interesting qualifications to this theory, see Sheedy (1990) 31–40.

[130] See above, Figure 5.6. In general, cf. Coldstream (1971) 1–15 (esp. p. 8–11, for a list of the vases by the Painter and his workshop, and their relative and absolute chronology) as well as Coldstream (1994) 77–86.

[131] Cf. Coldstream (1983*a*) 205–206.

Several explanations have been proposed to justify the brief period of unprecedented Athenian artistic domination in the MG II Aegean, and its sudden end at the outset of the LG epoch. Although the unparalleled quality of imported Attic pottery accounts for its ascendency, an equally coherent explanation for its decline remains to be found. One theory points to the development of Attic pottery into monumental shapes embellished with specialized images for funerary use. Such vessels, we are told, were useless in the everyday life of Greek élites, and thereby fell out of favour outside Athens.[132] The complementary 'from pots to politics' theory, crediting the rise of the *polis* with the burst of local LG styles in the Aegean, may also be too simplistic. Although, as we shall see in the next chapter, the two phenomena are simply two sides of the same coin, I would rather suggest that 'constitutional' developments might be less directly related to changing MG II artistic fashions than idiosyncrasies in the lifestyles of the élites who were the principal customers for luxurious pottery at the time.

The disintegration of the 'Attic *koinē*' may seem so striking and abrupt due to the fact that Attic pottery was previously, so to speak, 'over-demanded'. And this unusually large appetite for Athenian wares may have principally been stimulated by the appeal of the symposion, the new social habit excellently corresponding with the needs and ambitions of the emerging Greek aristocracy in many corners of the Aegean. Athenian drinking pots would just be vehicles for, and material incarnations of, the most desirable aristocratic lifestyle. On this theory, the two-generation-long period of prosperity of the 'Attic MG II *koinē*' would be closely, although not necessarily straightforwardly, related to the spread of the symposion.

* * *

It should be borne in mind that all the phenomena scrutinized thus far should be interpreted as indicating only the lower limit for the emergence of the symposion. Its clear material manifestations can only be expected to follow intrinsic and still unexpressed social and

[132] Thus Coldstream (1983*a*) 205. Let us note, however, that big *kraters* by the Cesnola Painter are hardly less monumental than the Athenian 'medium' size for this period. Furthermore, recent finds from the sanctuary of Poseidon at Kalaureia show that Athenian LG monumental vases (including those of the Hirschfeld Painter and some other, influenced by the Dipylon workshop) served the local élites as votives. See Wells (2011) 213–215.

cultural processes underlying the advent, or perhaps better: the ultimate consolidation of the Greek aristocratic banquet. I will try to address these processes when conceiving a general historical model in the conclusions of this book.

5.4 A 'SYMPOSION EFFECT' IN THE MEDITERRANEAN?

5.4.1 The Symposion and Aristocratic Gift Exchange in the Mediterranean

In 1983, John N. Coldstream drew attention to the very peculiar case of the Athenian MG II drinking sets whose wide circulation in the Mediterranean could not be accounted for by commercial exchange or domestic use by Greeks travelling overseas.[133] An assemblage of 33 imports from the Aegean has been found in the famous royal tomb no. 1 at Salamis in Cyprus, which includes a large Attic *krater* (no. 48 = no. 222 in Dikaios' catalogue of finds) with as many as 20 coeval Attic *skyphoi*, all accompanied by 12 more pendent-semicircle northern Cycladic pots (two *skyphoi* and ten 'plates').[134] This rich set contained more than a half of all the early eighth-century Aegean vessels known from Cyprus before AD 1983.[135] Continuing in Cyprus, a similar luxurious MG II *krater* was discovered in a rich tomb in Amathous (gr. no. 2), but sherds of some more *kraters* of this type were found further east, in the royal capital of Samaria, at Tyre in Phoenicia, Hamath on the Orontes (seat of a powerful Neo-Hittite kingdom), and finally one more fragment of a *krater* emerged as far as at Huelva

[133] Coldstream (1983*a*) 201–206 (followed by a discussion, p. 207). See now Lane Fox (2009), esp. Part One and Two, for a wide-ranging and up-to-date study of the overseas contacts of Greeks in the eighth century. Regrettably, I read this beautiful book too late to be able to discuss it systematically in mine.

[134] See Gjerstad (1977) esp. 25 (the MG II *krater*: no. 48, Plate IV.2; the Attic *skyphoi*: nos. 28–47, Plate III). According to Gjerstad, the fabrication date of this assemblage is *c.*775–750 BC, but its depository date *c.*750–725 (Cypro-Geometric III B). Cf. Dikaios (1963) cols. 126–198, esp. 173, with Appendix I (by J. N. Coldstream), cols. 198–204. Recently, for Greek imports in Cyprus and their meaning within a local context and in a wider net of Mediterranean exchanges, see in particular Crielaard (1996) esp. 116–139 and Table VII. Cf. also Crielaard (1999*b*) 261–290. See also below, 5.4.2.

[135] Coldstream (1983*a*) 201–202.

in Spain, namely at the probable location of Tartessos (Coldstream 1983*a*, 203).

Drawing on a brief note on the Salamis drinking set in the final paragraph of the last paper by V. R. d'A. Desborough (posthumously published),[136] Coldstream advanced the theory that all of the aforementioned finds may be indicative of the practice of gift exchange between noble families in the Mediterranean.[137] As to the *kraters* from Huelva, Samaria, Hamath, and of course Tyre, he posited some agency linked to Phoenician traders, 'but the important facts here are, first, that these kraters were originally made for high society in Athens; and, second, that they eventually found their way to high places, from one end of the Mediterranean to the other' (Coldstream 1983*a*, 203).

5.4.2 The Levant, Cyprus, and Italy. Problems of Interpretation

Whereas the logic of élite gift exchange seems to work well in the Aegean, the value of Coldstream's theory for the elucidation of Attic MG II imports in non-Greek milieus further away in the Mediterranean remains to be checked. In the following, I will draw on the findings of a recent work by Jan Paul Crielaard. I am deeply indebted to him for generously sharing several crucial chapters (and catalogues of finds) of his unpublished and much awaited book, *The Euboeans Overseas: Long-Distance Contacts and Colonization as Status Activities in Early Iron Age Greece* (Crielaard 1996).[138] Of course, he cannot be held responsible for the use I make of his work.

Crielaard shows that two important regions under scrutiny, Cyprus and the Levant (with Cilicia further north forming a case apart), geographically close to each other as they are, present divergent patterns of consumption of EIA Greek pottery. What both have in common is that 'Greek ceramics were not imported there for strictly functional reasons or to fulfill local needs' (Crielaard 1999*b*, 278). In the case of the Levantine coast, our evidence is thinner and more

[136] Coldstream (1983*a*) 202–203; cf. Desborough (1979) 122.

[137] Recently, see also Crielaard (1996) esp. 133–134.

[138] See also Crielaard (1999*a*) and (1999*b*), for the revealing 'consumption oriented approach' to the import of EIA Greek pottery into Cyprus (esp. pp. 271–272, for Crielaard's criticism of traditional approaches to this issue).

circumstantial, making it difficult to suggest some consistent pattern. It comes for the most part from habitational contexts, whereas our Cypriot material has been yielded by burials that are more representative since less affected by chances of discovery. The least one can say is, first, that both regions witnessed a constant influx of Greek imported pottery beginning as early as the second half of the tenth century BC. Second, the dominating types of vessels imported to both regions are open-shaped. Third, *krater* fragments become more numerous there in the eighth century BC. And fourth, Greek pots were usually imported from Euboea; the Attic imports come next, but only in the first half of the century (MG II). All this is not enough to suggest that the Near East élites participated in gift exchange involving the Aegean élites, let alone to link this situation with the historical process of the emergence of the symposion.

* * *

In Cyprus, the situation is better known, more complex, and potentially more meaningful for my present study. Although the earliest Greek pottery is attested there not later than at the beginning of the ninth century BC, large quantities of Greek vessels were imported in MG II and LG periods, that is during the eighth century. Interestingly, not only genuine Greek vases but also their locally produced imitations were mostly confined to drinking vessels (*skyphoi*, *kotylai*, and cups). Containers such as amphorae, jars, and *oinochoai* were more rare, whereas *kraters* gained in relative popularity in the MG II period. The upsurge in Greek and especially Athenian imports in MG II cannot be doubted, although its dramatic scale is partly due to the Salamis royal tomb no. 1, equipped among other things with as many as 20 Attic *skyphoi* (29 Attic MG II imports in total).[139] One important MG II novelty is the appearance of drinking sets such as that in the Salamis royal tomb 1. Another set, consisting of items of heterogeneous provenance, in gr. NW 194.I at Amathous, may be earlier (MG I).

Strikingly, besides the two aforementioned burials and perhaps two less easily ascertainable tombs,[140] the majority of Cypriot tombs

[139] For this burial, see above, p. 294.

[140] Amathous gr. 2 has twelve fragments of LG Euboean *skyphoi*. The famous Cesnola *krater* (see Figure 5.6) was most probably discovered in a lavish chamber tomb in the Kourion–Kaloriziki cemetery alongside two more vases (*oinochoai*) by the same painter.

contain just one or two pieces of Greek pottery often accompanied by a number of local vases and/or Levantine imported pots. This phenomenon should be considered in geographical terms, too. On the one hand, only a fraction of tombs in a given cemetery contained Greek vases (e.g. 19 per cent in Amathous). In Salamis, 'The distribution of Greek imports follows this hierarchy in cemeteries: genuine Greek pottery is limited to "royal" tombs 1 and 2, whereas "royal" tomb 31, belonging to an individual of less elevated status, yielded a local imitation of a Greek skyphos. In contemporary burials of commoners neither category of pottery is present' (Crielaard 1999*b*, 273–274). On the other hand, following David Rupp's notion of a so-called 'dendritic central-palace system' (i.e. a functionally stratified settlement hierarchy with the royal capitals controlling town-like settlements which in turn controlled villages), Crielaard concludes that 'imported Greek pottery was restricted to members of the elite living in royal capitals situated on the coast. Members of the elite of lower ranking and/or individuals living in the hinterland had to be content with local imitations of Greek pottery, whereas the common man had access to neither imports nor imitations. Apparently, genuine imports were employed as part of a social strategy of distinction and exclusion . . .' (Crielaard 1999*b*, 276–277).

Now, this situation fits in well with the noble gift exchange procedures postulated by Coldstream. And the deposition of such imported items in graves 'was supposed to illustrate the variety of external contacts the deceased had maintained during his or her life' (Crielaard 1999*b*, 280). It is, however, difficult to assess the bearing of this Cypriot 'burial language' on our present argument. In terms of grave goods, the high status funerary behaviour in Cyprus also included 'military paraphernalia and other symbols of authority, as well as particular categories of luxury items, such as ivory furniture or Levantine unguent vessels' (Crielaard 1999*b*, 274). What we face here, then, is the eclectic symbolism of noble grave gifts, resembling that of the roughly coeval 'princely' tombs in (Italian) Kyme. Next, the strictly hierarchical distribution of Greek imports, as well as our general knowledge of the socio-political structures on Cyprus, makes highly unlikely any interpretation of Cypriot drinking customs of the time as egalitarian and at the same time competitive, in a word as the symposion. One would rather expect Dietler's 'patron-role' feasting there.

On the other hand, Greek imports were precisely drinking vessels and, whenever available, drinking sets of a highly symbolic value. Down the social scale, this funerary symbolism was imitated using much poorer items at hand—not unlike in the less lavishly equipped graves in the LG Pithekoussai. On Cyprus, the symbols of the prestige of the highest élites would stimulate imitation, too, although their banquets were not symposia in all probability.

We may conclude that, in the graves of the Cypriot 'royals' and of the members of lower local élites, drinking vases just supplement other symbolic idioms based on weapons, Oriental luxury items, etc. In regard to the rich drinking sets found in the Cypriot 'royal' burials, they most probably reflect the ideal lifestyle envisioned at the Aegean (and perhaps in particular Athenian) end of the noble exchange, namely envisioned by those who sent these sets as noble gifts to the Cypriot 'kings'. It was the Aegean élites who regarded wine drinking sets as attributes of the most desirable lifestyle, which they wished for their foreign counterparts and friends as well. Without necessarily testifying to the adaptation of the Greek symposion on Cyprus, this particularity of the Cypriot grave goods, when combined with my previous arguments regarding the 'Attic cultural *koinē*', makes it possible to discern yet another 'symposion effect' here.

* * *

Scholars have long been trying to link developments in Greek drinking customs with the changes in the lifestyle of the élites of non-Greek Italy.[141] In principle, Italy might have been a privileged region for our search of the 'symposion effect' in the Mediterranean. Sadly, the historian of the symposion can only be disappointed when dealing with the pertinent archaeological data. True, one may say that in the course of the eighth century a new style of banqueting was developed in Italy. However, I believe we are not entitled to reach detailed conclusions regarding the link between this change and the nascent symposion. Our principal source for the earliest Greek influences in the mainland is a mass of Greek *skyphoi* found in the Quattro Fontanili Villanovan cemetery at Veii,[142] which are followed at the site by

[141] See e.g. Murray (1994); cf. Rathje (1988) and (1990). See also above, Section 3.2.2.

[142] Cf. Hoffmann (1992/1993), with bibliography. Roughly a generation after the appearance of the Greek ware there, we have some evidence for a Greek potter's workshop on site (cf. e.g. Osborne 2009, 107). In general, for Greek Geometric pottery, and its local imitations, in Campania, Latium Vetus, and Etruria, see Peserico (1995).

hoards of locally produced copies. Two alternative chronologies have been proposed for the earliest finds there, dating the appearance of the Greek material to *c.*800–760 BC[143] or 'not before 750 BC.'[144] Thus far, the debate seems far from settled. Adopting one or another chronology would utterly determine our interpretation of the early history of the symposion. Opting for the higher dating would result in recognizing an immediate 'symposion effect' in the Greek imports and their instantaneous imitation on the Apennine Peninsula, whereas choosing the later chronology would yield very different historical conclusions. This being the case, before the aforementioned debate has been settled, we can only suspend our judgement on the possible influence of the emerging symposion in Italy.

5.4.3 An Anti-Sympotic Reaction in Crete?

In the paper entitled 'Ceramic Variability and Drinking Habits in Iron Age Crete', Antonis Kotsonas provides a study of the spectacular and very peculiar career of Cretan coated cups (i.e. covered with black glaze) in the eighth century BC (Kotsonas 2011). While still present in sanctuaries and settlements, the *krater* seems to disappear from Cretan burials from around 800 BC and can only be found henceforth in cemeteries in central and eastern parts of the island. Simultaneously, 'the Cretan coated cup changed considerably from the end of the ninth century. . . . At that time, the Cretan vessel grew considerably in size' (Kotsonas 2011, 902–903). Kotsonas observes that within some three generations the capacity of this vessel grew almost tenfold (see Figure 5.9). At the same time, the shape rapidly grew in popularity: during the eighth century, it become more common than all other shapes in the Eleutherna necropolis and dominated the Knossian cemeteries.[145] The correspondence between the two processes is clear: 'the enlarged coated cup could have served as a handy

[143] See Close-Brooks & Ridgway (1979) 95–127, esp. 113–124.

[144] Cf. Descoeudres & Kearsley (1983) 9–53; cf. Bartoloni (1989) vol. I, pp. 117–128. Osborne (2009) 107, opts for the upper chronology: 'probably around 775 BC'. In general, cf. now Bartoloni & Nizzo (2005). What is at stake in these debates is the nature of Greek 'pre-colonial' contacts with indigenous peoples in Italy, if one adopts the higher dating (before the foundation of permanent Greek settlements in Pithekoussai and Kyme). See above, p. 255 n. 18.

[145] For a convenient introduction to the Eleutherna necropolises, see Stampolidis (2004) 116–138. Cf. also Stampolidis (2002).



Figure 5.9 Comparative view of Cretan coated cups from Eleutherna: the late ninth, early–mid eighth, and late eighth–early seventh centuries BC (after Kotsonas 2011). Courtesy of N. Chr. Stampolidis

"mini-krater", which could easily be taken outdoors. The development would have allowed each member of a drinking party to mix wine and water in an individual container, according to personal preference' (Kotsonas 2011, 904). Given the fact that the demise of the *krater* does not affect habitational contexts or votive practices in Cretan sanctuaries, Kotsonas links the whole phenomenon with 'a transformation of drinking rituals bidding farewell to the deceased' (Kotsonas 2011, 902). This is a very sensible conjecture, but I would also try to interpret this change in less pragmatic terms. As they record actual funerary rituals in a rather oblique manner, the grave goods would in the first place reflect the 'social persona' of the deceased. This symbolic interpretation seems to be further confirmed by the fact that miniature (or 'undersized') coated cups found their way to subadult burials in Knossos and Eleutherna in the eighth and seventh centuries BC. And for some important reason a new symbolic idiom was needed to express the ideal self-definition of the Cretan élites, which is all the more striking given that in everyday life as well as in their votive practices, the same communities and individuals still stuck to their traditional ways.

It is of crucial importance here to note that the difference between the use of these large 'coated cups' and the usual drinking sets (*kraters*

with jugs and drinking cups) has clear social implications. Whereas *kraters* served as tools for the distribution of wine among the members of a sympotic group, thus securing their solidarity and tightening their ceremonial coherence, the use of the 'coated cups' atomized the group, breaking down the circulation of cups 'to the right' and thus most probably overturning sympotic equality and simultaneously dissolving the diverse competitive practices involved. Now, this is exactly the anti-sympotic logic studied in my second chapter, focusing on the case of the ritual of the Athenian Anthesteria and on the literary sources related to the ideological picture of Spartan and Cretan conviviality.

It is far from clear whether or not the phenomenon of the Cretan 'coated cups' corroborates the historicity of Cretan drinking habits, and thus pinpoints the origin of those customs to as early as the eighth century BC. Here, it is sufficient to interpret this phenomenon as a reaction against the custom of refined aristocratic drinking. The severe form of the simple black-glazed cup is yet another sign of the demise of aristocratic, that is, refined and luxurious, banquets.[146] The reasons why some Cretan communities decided to go against the current of the spreading aristocratic habit in the eighth century BC cannot be dealt with here, but one could a priori surmise that some important socio-political processes which made Crete a unique region in the Greek world in the seventh and especially sixth centuries were well under way in the eighth century BC.[147] Be that as it may, I would argue that the eighth-century Cretan demise of the *krater* and the development of the Cretan 'coated cup' provide us with a convenient *terminus ante quem* for the accelerated career of the symposion in the Aegean.

[146] For seventh- and sixth- century developments, see Whitley (2005), who observed a more general phenomenon indicated by a systemic link between a reluctance about personal display visible in Cretan epigraphic habits, an equally 'austere' visual culture of archaic Cretans, and their 'move away from symposium culture' (Whitley 2005, 43). In his view, 'what was characteristic of sixth and fifth century Cretan society was the deliberate suppression of expressions of aristocratic individuality, of a kind we find elsewhere in Archaic and early Classical Greece' (ibid., 45). Turning away from the symposion was one side of this wider phenomenon and Whitley foreshadowed one aspect of Kotsonas's study of the earlier historical period when stressing the contrast between the lavishly painted drinking ware of continental Greece and the austere 'all-over-black' Cretan 'coated cups' of the late archaic period.

[147] For the uniqueness of Crete in the archaic period, see Morris (1998) esp. 59–68 as well as Whitley (2001) 243–252.

6

Conclusions and Implications: The Symposion, Aristocracy, and the Rise of the *Polis*

6.1 PRELIMINARY REMARKS

In the humanities and social sciences, the results of our inquiries often match what we were looking for from the outset. And although this is typical of the hermeneutic circle, it need not undermine our conclusions. What this does underscore is the necessity of establishing the premises of our inquiry as carefully as possible. At the beginning, I suggested a retrospective method that would enable us to formulate an 'ideal type' for the symposion to be applied to the data pre-dating the testimony of the 'Cup of Nestor' in the second half of the eighth century BC. This definition made it possible to put together diverse pieces of archaeological and literary evidence, hitherto ignored or treated separately by scholars of the symposion who have adopted different 'working hypotheses'. I believe that the results of the present study are no less plausible than those reached using their methods. In this final chapter, I would like to prove that my conclusions are not only plausible, but perhaps even persuasive. In so doing, I will try to develop a general explanatory model in order to elucidate the origins of the symposion.

* * *

Let me recapitulate my findings thus far by beginning with the *pars destruens* of my argument. In the first place, I would hope that readers have seen that the widely adopted theory of a decisive historical link between the symposion and the Levantine *marzēaḥ* is untenable, as is the widespread notion of the symposion as a reclining feast.

Defining the symposion as a culture-oriented drinking occasion of simultaneously egalitarian and competitive character, I suggested another 'tracer element', that is, the subordination of all the sympotic pastimes to the manner of the distribution of wine, namely the '*epidexia* principle', or the rule of the circulating cup. This very contrivance ensured the rigorous equality of the participants and by the same token stimulated their rivalry. As such, it incarnated the tension between the spirit of competition and the principle of equality that was constitutive of the system of values of archaic Greek aristocracy.

Having recourse to this 'ideal type' of the symposion, I identified this kind of banquet in the epigram of the Pithekoussan 'Cup of Nestor', in the background of the Homeric poems, and in some intriguing archaeological phenomena as early as in the MG II period, or at the beginning of the eighth century BC.

In the first half of the eighth century at the latest, convivial symbolism became a crucial element in the self-identification of a part of the Aegean élites. Interestingly, based on their attitudes toward the symbolism of culture-oriented drinking, it was possible to single out three different strategies connected with three separate social groups. First, there was the 'convivial élite' that defined itself in the first place as those having access to the sympotic lifestyle. Secondly, there were some members of a lower social stratum who aspired to this lifestyle, but perhaps unsuccessful in real socio-economic terms. Thirdly, we found the group desperately trying to dissociate itself from the 'convivial élite', particularly by means of conspicuous outbidding—still in convivial terms at times, although their symbolic forms of expression could assume truly 'elephantine' dimensions, as in the case of the Athenian LG 'Dipylon' grave markers.

We also saw that as early as in the times of the 'Cup of Nestor' and the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, the symposion gave rise to a certain moral uneasiness, or at least it could be viewed in an ambiguous manner—as it was in later archaic moralizing poetry. Hence, there was the possible Homeric alternative to the symposion: an ideal of the severe and moral hierarchical feast of heroes under the auspices of a local king of unquestioned authority. Put cautiously, in view of the epigram of the 'Cup of Nestor', it is clear that by the mid eighth century the 'heroic feast' was not the most conspicuous, let alone the only possible, manner of ostentatious feasting. But most probably, the 'Homeric feast', with all its ideal socio-political implications, did not exist in Geometric or early archaic Greece.

* * *

To my mind, one of the most important developments in Aegean archaeology in the last few decades has been the growing awareness amongst scholars of the regional variety of the Greek Dark Ages, in particular in the Proto-Geometric epoch.[1] Against this background, it is all the more striking that at the end of the pioneering phase of the archaic period, in the later eighth and seventh century, a large part of the Greek world—for all the local divergences with respect to material culture—looks fairly uniform in social and especially cultural terms.[2] In view of the variety of the ninth century, this fact requires explanation.[3] I would argue that one of the most important factors involved in this (relative) 'uniformization' was the common aristocratic culture appealing to the social élites throughout the Greek world, élites that maintained strong and multidimensional contacts on the extra-regional level. One of the most important carriers of this aristocratic culture was surely the pleasurable pastime of the symposion.

I take the Homeric poems to stem from an already quite uniform cultural milieu, whose most conspicuous material traces are yielded, already in the early eighth century, by our Athenian and Euboean evidence. We already observed the workings of the brief 'MG II Attic *koinē*' alongside archaeologically observable changes in the symbolic displays of Athenian élites in this century, but the Euboean evidence of the symposion is equally arresting, featuring the elaborate poem on the 'Cup of Nestor' and other convivial and poetic vase inscriptions of the eighth century, all providing us with a convenient *terminus ante quem* for the rise of the institution. For these reasons, we cannot exclude the possibility that the formative stages of the symposion took place in this region—on both sides of the Euripos straits.

[1] See. esp. Whitley (1991*b*) and, in general, Whitley (1991*a*) and (1993) as well as Lemos (2002) (cf. the agenda for future research of the Dark Ages formulated by Coulson 1990). Cf. also numerous case studies gathered together in Mazarakis Ainian (2011) as well the essays collected in Deger-Jalkotzy & Lemos (2006).

[2] It is true (as Morris 1998, 30 puts it) that 'no two *poleis* were exactly the same' in the eighth and the seventh centuries. The same diversity is often emphasized by Osborne (2009) *passim* (and *per litteras*, 8 May 2011). However, as compared to the earlier epoch, the relative uniformity of the early archaic *polis*-societies seems unmistakable.

[3] In a very important paper, Gounaris (2005) shows how divergent were the local paths of development of poliadic cults in their relationship with the nascent *poleis* in different islands of the Cyclades in PG and Geometric times. The relative uniformity of the ultimate result of these processes makes even more interesting the question of the underlying mechanism accountable for this historical development.

However, this cannot be definitively proven and it has not been my intention to do so.

Instead of trying to answer the question of where and exactly when it arose, I will try to address the question of how and why the Greek aristocratic banquet came into being in the first half of the eighth century, at the very latest, and most probably some two generations earlier. To do so, I will develop a hypothetical construction, an explanatory model based on the available historical sources, which also integrates some comparative data to bridge any gaps in our available material. At this stage, I believe, it is fully justified to introduce such external considerations into our historical reconstruction of an intrinsic socio-cultural process.

6.2 THE GREEK CITY, ARISTOCRACY, AND THE CIRCULATING CUP

However, I will begin by having recourse to a much later source, namely to a fragment of the prose treatise on the *Lacedaemonian Constitution* by Kritias of Athens. Let me quote this passage once again (DK 88 B 33 = *FGrHist* 338A F 10; *ap.* Athen. XI 463 e-f; tr. W. S. Morison):

> The Chian and Thasian man makes pledges from large cups passed to the right, the Athenian from small cups passed to the right, and the Thessalian pledges from enormous cups [passed] to whomever he wishes, but the Lakedaimonian drinks individually from the cup at his side; his cup-bearer pours just so much as he might drink.

I have already dealt with this passage in the study of Greek convivial imagery.[4] Here, I would simply like to deal with the historical reliability of these claims. I think we can assume Kritias's trustworthiness. Besides his diverse 'international' links with the élites throughout the Greek world and his special interest in Spartan customs and the Spartan political system, he spent several years in exile in Thessaly.[5] To the extent that we may trust him regarding the specificity of the

[4] See above, pp. 98–99.

[5] Cf. Xen. *HG* II 3, 36 and *Mem.* I, 2, 24. Cf. also (perhaps alluding to an earlier stay of Kritias in Thessaly) Philostr. *Vit. soph.* I 16 (501–502) (= Kritias, test. 11 G–P).

Spartan drinking habits, we should also trust his remarks concerning Thessaly.

We already observed the anti-sympotic logic behind the Spartan decision to abolish the *epidexia* manner of drinking and the more complex socio-political context of this decision. Now we see that Kritias ascribes the observance of the principle of cup circulation to the élites of Athens, Chios, and Thasos. True, the Thessalians were regularly perceived in classical times as only slightly less strange than the Spartans, so we may assume that drinking 'to the right' was a universal Greek habit. But the reason why Thessaly was deemed exceptional is of great importance here. The great houses of Thessaly (Aleuads, Skopads, Echekratidae, etc.) were unrivalled in the Greek world and only powerful tyrants and barbarian chieftains could match them in wealth and hereditary political authority. If we remind ourselves of our preliminary definition of archaic Greek aristocracy, it becomes clear that Thessalian élites do not deserve to be called aristocrats. In their country, where the normal institutions of the *polis* came into being only very late,[6] the citizenry proper did not play a political role sufficient to provide the political and cultural background for their activity. In a word, the great houses of Thessaly did not have their 'less equals', *kakoi*, to integrate with, or dissociate themselves from, using informal and cultural means.[7] The egalitarian and competitive symposion was superfluous there, and therefore it is no wonder that they did not actually observe crucial sympotic customs.

I would posit that the habits described by Kritias were by no means a fresh development in Thessaly, but that—unlike those observed in Sparta—they go back to the early archaic period. Incidentally, the conspicuous 'warrior graves', abandoned elsewhere in the Greek world during the archaic period, were still in use in Thessaly in the

[6] Cf. e.g. Hansen & Nielsen (2004) 35 with n. 60 as well as pp. 676–683 and 691–707. For a classic view of the Thessalian polity see Meyer (1909) 218–237. Recently, cf. Archibald (2000); Morgan (2003) esp. 18–24 and 85–106. See also the next note.

[7] In general, see esp. Thuc. IV 78, 3, for the traditional constitution of the Thessalians (*dynasteia* as oposed to *isonomia*). Cf. also Dem. [*Aristocr.*] XXIII 199 (for private armies of the great Thessalian houses). For a good introduction to the socio-political problems of archaic Thessaly, see Forrest (1982) 294–299, emphasizing the importance of 'the rivalling ambitions of the great houses, of basileis unchallenged from below' (ibid., p. 299). I think we are entitled to assume that this position, 'unchallenged from below', resulted from the absence, or unimportance, of the Thessalian 'less equal'.

eighth century and well beyond, up to the end of the sixth century BC.[8] In short, Thessalian élites must have cherished essentially similar forms of prestigious self-identification across centuries.

Now, if we take Kritias's testimony seriously and ask ourselves about the common denominator behind Spartan and Thessalian reluctance about the symposion, as set against the usual élite customs in Athens, Chios, and Thasos, I think the lesson we take from this fragment of the *Constitution of the Lacedaemonians* must run as follows. In our tracing the origins of the symposion, we are entitled to postulate direct historical links between the emergence of the aristocracy, the nascent *polis*, and this institution.

6.3 HOMER—THE SYMPOSION AND THE NEW ÉLITE[9]

Working with the texts from a different angle from Chapter 4, here I would like to attempt to read Homeric poetry as testimony to certain aspects of a very peculiar situation in Greek society in the earliest documented phase of the archaic period. I previously mentioned that Benedetto Bravo, in his 1988 article 'The *Polis* in Homer', proved that Homer was already familiar with a society that exhibited the key characteristics of the later *polis*: the bipolar division into free citizen-warriors and slaves, as well as the citizen ethos according to which both the 'worthless' (*kakoi*) and the 'virtuous' (*agathoi*) considered themselves a homogeneous privileged group of those born to take an interest in *polis* affairs, conduct political activity, and fight in defence of their homeland—regardless of the economic and social differences between the two subgroups (Bravo 1988, *passim*, esp. 65).

In the guise of a beggar, Odysseus presents himself to the suitors as the victim of a dramatic change of fate—once 'fortunate' (*olbios*) and empowered by family connections (*Od.* XVIII 138–140), he lived as 'a man of prosperity', having 'serving men by thousands, and many other good things, by which men live well and are called prosperous' (XVII 419–423; tr. R. Lattimore). When Eurymachos insults him by

[8] See Morris (1998) 36–39 and 51.

[9] Sections 6.3 and 6.4 below were translated from Polish by Dorota Dzierzbicka.

offering to hire him as a farmhand (*thēs*),[10] the beggar blurts out that if only he had a chance, even today he would show the mocker that he is still capable of professional fieldwork (he will easily surpass Eurymachos in reaping and ploughing) and is able to fight in the first row of warriors (XVIII 366–380). Bravo took this as proof 'that men from the élite who run their *oikoi* can from time to time work their fields themselves: apparently, physical work is no disgrace if treated as a distraction, from time to time, whenever one likes it' (Bravo 1988, 46).[11]

Perhaps this was so. However, I think that the vagabond's proud self-presentation should not be taken literally. First of all, I do not believe that Homer was very consistent or that he required his audience to clearly remember the beggar's earlier declarations. I also suspect that the reference to his aristocratic origins served the literary effect of emphasizing the magnitude of the changes in his fortune, and thus the tragic fickleness of the human condition. Moreover, as Yuri V. Andreev has pointed out, Homer idealizes his picture of social reality to create a harmonious world corresponding to the ideals of the élite; he does so by assimilating or making the whole social group resemble the *aristoi* (Andreev 1976, 73–74).[12] Notably, he sometimes calls slaves 'divine' (like Philoitius or the faithful Eumaeus), 'noble', and occasionally, like Eumaeus, even of royal blood. As we shall see below, in Homer the characters directly characterized as representatives of 'men of the people' are always 'well-off', if not 'rich'. Thus, I would suggest that the situation of the invented beggar better suits the social standing of an ex-*kakos*, a member of the *dēmos*, rather than a representative of the strict social élite.[13] I would therefore interpret the statement of the disguised Odysseus as a kind of manifesto of the non-élite social stratum, whose citizen status relies on ownership of land (which this vagabond had lost) and service in the citizen army (unable to arm himself for war, the beggar lost this option as well). Having forsaken both key civic competencies, one falls to the category of a man that is still free, but no longer a citizen,

[10] *Od.* XVIII 357–364.

[11] Somewhat similarly Strasburger (1953) 104.

[12] Cf. Bravo (1988) 47.

[13] Note that Odysseus—in the guise of a beggar—is certain that he will easily surpass Eurymachos in field labour. I have the impression that the vagabond speaks from the position of someone who, as opposed to aristocrats, has very good knowledge of agriculture because he has had to till his own land his whole life. This does not rule out the possibility that members of the élite ploughed the fields from time to time.

a *thēs*.[14] For someone who was, after all, a citizen in the past, especially if he had lost his land and citizen status recently and/or suddenly, a proposal of work for hire might have been offensive. Obviously, in practice such a *thēs* would have been forced to accept the offer of hired labour in order to survive.

In this context, the other words of Odysseus as beggar, which I have analysed above, are somewhat puzzling. In book XIV of the *Odyssey,* the disguised Odysseus 'feeds' Eumaeus a very different story about his past. He now poses as a Cretan, a bastard son of Castor, who inherited very little after his father's death, but built a strong social position for himself by his military prowess (*Od.* XIV 199–228). He therefore presents himself as a socially advancing *kakos*, who, again by the will of Zeus, fell into his present itinerant poverty as a result of a sudden change of luck. However, this time the beggar boasts of his skills in the service of a master (*drēstosynē*): he can build a fire, prepare meat, pour wine—in short, 'all such work as meaner men (*cherēes*) bestow on their betters (*agathoi*)' (*Od.* XV 321–324; tr. R. Lattimore). This kind of service is certainly much more pleasant and therefore less degrading than the work of a hired farmhand.[15] But comparing this declaration to other portions of the *Odyssey*, I sense that we are not dealing with an echo of the social reality of the poet's time, but with an interesting social ideal. According to Homer, this is what the relations between *aristoi* and *kakoi* (synonymous to the term *cherēes*)[16] should be like. The latter should be happy to serve

[14] Their deplorable position is indicated by the famous words of the ghost of Achilles in the Netherworld: *Od.* XI 489–491.

[15] Let us remember, however, that, while in Homer pouring wine is a noble task performed by specialists of considerable status, as is the preparation of meat, keeping the fire ablaze during the feast is a responsibility of scorned female slaves. Cf. above, p. 216.

[16] Andreev (1976) 74 (cf. above with n. 12), aptly points to the 'basic sociological paradox of the Homeric poetry', namely the fact that in Homer the presence of terms like *aristoi* ('the best'), *esthloi* ('the noble'), or finally 'heroes', assumes the existence of 'inferior' or 'worthless' individuals (*kakoi*), who are not mentioned in Homer in a direct manner. The term *cherēes* ('inferiors') is used in the *Odyssey* as a technical term from the sphere of social relations (in contrast to *agathoi*: *Od.* XV 324), which makes sense only in opposition to the (socially) 'superior' or 'good' (cf. esp. *Il.* X 237–239 (on the social gap between the 'ordinary' heroes and royal families); *Od.* XX 133 (probably also in a social, not necessarily moral context)). It fills this gap, indicating the presence of such words in the language of social relations of the poet's time. *Od.* XV 324 is probably the clearest such pair of opposing technical terms in Homer.

aristocrats during élite banquets.[17] As far as that aspect is concerned, however, Homeric poems give us a glimpse of an entirely different reality, which was never openly described in the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey*.

In *Il.* XVII 575–577, we meet a certain Podes, who is 'both rich and noble' (ἀφνειός τ' ἀγαθός τε), and whose death on the battlefield enrages Hector, who 'prized [him] above others from the *dēmos*' (μάλιστα δέ μιν τίεν Ἕκτωρ | δήμου), because Podes was his companion (*hetairos*) and fellow-banqueter (*eilapinestēs*).[18] Also, one Poulydamas seems to be a member of the same social circle. The description of his social standing in the *Iliad* is rather unclear. This holder of a noble sounding name (lit. 'One Who Vanquishes Many') is, on the one hand, a son of Panthoos, one of the Trojan elders (*Il.* III 146–153), Hector's *hetairos* with special intellectual skills (esp. XVIII 249–252), one of the 'best' at war (XIV 424–425) and a 'chief' (*anax*: XV 453–454). On the other hand, in his own estimation he is part of the *dēmos*, and although it seems that he had publicly argued with Hector many times (*Il.* XII 211–212),[19] he is aware that 'it is not seemly (οὐδὲ ἔοικεν) for someone from the *dēmos* (δήμου ἐόντα)[20] to speak beside the mark, neither in the councils (*boulē*), nor in the fighting, but always to uphold your [*sc.* Hector's—M.W.] authority (*kratos*)' (XII 212–214). Yet another passage in the *Iliad* gives us a better understanding of the functioning of the circle of Hector's companions and fellow-banqueters. In *Il.* XXII 489–498 (tr. R. Lattimore), Andromache laments the fate of their son

[17] Or, going even further, the poorer ones among them should serve in the homes of nobility on a daily basis and the richer ones could at most become modest *hetairoi*, or 'clients' of the aristocrats. See the next footnote.

[18] On Homer's *hetairoi* and *therapontes* see esp. Ulf (1990) 127–157; Welwei (1992) 485–492; and Donlan (1998). Despite the lively academic discussion on the subject, the nature of the groups of Homeric 'companions' and *therapontes* is unclear to me. The scholars regard the image of this group in Homer as historical and they use it to reconstruct the world of social relations in the Dark Ages. However, I suspect that this aspect, also, of the two poems may have more to do with Homer's 'set of ideas' than with any historical reality. The matter is very complex and needs to be analysed separately. At this point it is only noteworthy that a large part of the non-aristocrats in Homer are indeed *hetairoi* and/or *therapontes* of Homeric kings. It seems as if the idea of notable *kakoi* unconnected by any ties of dependence to any aristocrat was unacceptable to the poet.

[19] Cf. also *Il.* XVIII 249–313 with XXII 99–103. Generally cf. Bravo (1988) 36–37.

[20] With Bravo (1988) 36–37 n. 28, I accept (*inter alia* based on the testimony of *Il.* II 198; XI 328; XII 447; cf. also XVII 576–577) the emendation of Richard Bentley. The manuscript tradition offers δῆμον (which is impossible and variously explained by scholars). B. Hainsworth in his comm. *ad loc.* (*Iliad III*, p. 341) seems to hesitate on this matter.

Astyanax after his father's inexorable death: '. . . others will take his lands away from him (ἄλλοι γάρ οἱ ἀπουρίσσουσιν ἀρούρας). The day of bereavement leaves a child with no agemates to befriend him. He bows his head before every man, his cheeks are bewept, he goes, needy, a boy among his father's companions (ἐς πατρὸς ἑταίρους), and tugs at this man by the mantle, that man by the tunic, and they pity him, and one gives him a tiny drink from a goblet, enough to moisten his lips, not enough to moisten his palate. But one whose parents are living beats him out of the banquet (ἐκ δαιτύος) hitting him with his fists and in words also abuses him: "Get out, you! Your father is not dining among us" (οὐ σός γε πατὴρ μεταδαίνυται ἡμῖν)'.[21]

This passage is worth comparing to the previously analysed passage from the *Odyssey*,[22] which seems to be a suitable enough parallel to assume that one of them was composed as a kind of answer to the other, namely that the verses of the *Odyssey*, which I quote below, were intentionally conceived to contrast with Andromache's lament in the *Iliad*. In the so-called *Nekyia* (*Od.* XI 185–187; tr. R. Lattimore, adapted) Odysseus' mother assures him that 'No one yet holds your fine inheritance, but in freedom Telemachus administers your allotted lands (τεμένεα νέμεται), and participates in the equal feasts, work that befits a man with authority to judge, for all invite him (. . . δαῖτας ἐΐσας | δαίνυται, ἅς ἐπέοικε δικασπόλον ἄνδρ' ἀλεγύνειν· | πάντες γὰρ καλέουσι)'. I believe that all the passages cited above should be interpreted together.

First, it must be noted that the lament of Andromache and the episode from the *Iliad*, in which Hector is enraged upon seeing his companion Podes' death, allude to banqueting customs and a social reality that are in drastic opposition to Homeric reality and the system of values of the heroic 'royal banquet'. Both passages are embedded in the plot, so they belong to the poetic 'heroic register' of the *Iliad*. I believe, however, that we should treat them more or less like the phenomena occurring in the sphere of 'non-traditional referentiality' of both poems.[23] Let us note that both episodes have a similar function that I would label 'emphatic'. Both explain the

[21] This entire passage is full of words absent elsewhere in Homer, which, however, should not be a reason to worry, as this often happens with images the poet derived from the contemporary world (cf. N. Richardson, *Iliad VI*, p. 158–161). See also below.

[22] Above, pp. 201–202.

[23] Cf. above, p. 195.

emotional state of the hero or heroine experiencing strong feelings of agitation and despair. They are meant to cause the Homeric audience to feel sympathy or compassion for the attitudes and actions of Hector and Andromache. To increase the credibility or illustrate their state of mind at a given moment, the poet reaches for experiences drawn from the reality surrounding the poem's audience. This is the reason for the rather 'impressionistic', and therefore somewhat enigmatic, nature of the imagery emerging from these episodes.

Of particular importance to my line of reasoning is the above-mentioned contrast between the situation of Telemachus on Ithaca (although, as we know, this account was completely false) and the fate of Astyanax predicted by Andromache. Telemachus is said to be peacefully exploiting the estate inherited from Odysseus, while strangers are robbing Astyanax of arable land. Young Telemachus is to be respected by the Ithacan élite, who will invite him to 'noble banquets', whereas the son of Hector can hope for no more than a small sip of wine, and he will be driven away from the feast of his father's old 'companions'. In my opinion, even if the despairing Andromache was exaggerating, we can assume that we are dealing with a contrast between two realities: an ideal reality, which Homer would gladly see in the world that surrounds him and/or which he attributes to 'the good old days' of heroes (Telemachus' situation),[24] and the far-from-ideal reality he faced every day (the fate of Astyanax).

Let us add another, less jarring, contrast between these two episodes. Ideal feasts on Ithaca, most likely held on equal terms and following the principles of reciprocity, bring together members of the political élite whose (exclusive?) duties included holding court, whereas the social status of the Trojan banqueters was not specified. We can fill this gap thanks to the mention of Podes, one of Hector's *hetairoi* and his fellow banqueter. Feasts of Hector's social circle clearly include *kakoi*. This is confirmed by the episode with Poulydamas, which again presents a contrast between Homer's social ideal, in which the *kakoi* know their place and have no moral right to oppose aristocrats, and the practice in which, as with the case of Thersites in the second book of the *Iliad*, particularly active representatives of the

[24] The rule, already discussed, of paying for the feasts of the 'royal' élite with community funds is connected to the same ideal in my opinion. See above, Section 4.4.1.

citizen 'masses' speak out against the élite in the *agorē* on a regular basis (*Il.* II 212–217; cf. l. 246–251).[25]

Let me briefly summarize the conclusions reached thus far. According to Homer's social ideal, members of the élite feast together and enjoy a political and judicial monopoly. Their hereditary position cannot be questioned (in Odysseus' absence, Telemachus is said to have no trouble inheriting his father's social status). Representatives of the 'worthless' group (*cherēes*), which is clearly defined and precisely set apart from the aristocracy, may, at best, act as servants at the banquets of the nobles (as Odysseus in beggar's guise plans to do), and in civic life they do not feel authorized to oppose the *aristoi*. However, this is no more than an ideal. In practice, the *kakoi* can actively participate in political discourse. However, for our present purposes the social reality of the banquet is of greater interest, especially as it can be glimpsed in dramatic places in the *Iliad*.

The participants of prestigious banquets are both the most powerful members of the community and representatives of the 'people' who obtained the status of the 'noble and wealthy' thanks to good fortune, for example, at war.[26] At first glance, the cases of Podes and Hector may be interpreted as an example of Dietler's 'patron-role feast' or 'empowering feast', understood as an asymmetrical relationship between the 'patron' and the weaker 'client'.[27] However, the strong emotional bond between the companions (cf. Hector's reaction to Podes' death) makes it doubtful and Andromache's words decisively exclude such an interpretation. Her statement provides the impression that the group was undoubtedly egalitarian and the feasts were most likely based on reciprocity,[28] and, most importantly, they were organized without the slightest regard to

[25] Unlike Thersites, Poulydamas is in the poet's good graces because he is right in his conflict with Hector, and above all because he is a noble man and a brave warrior.

[26] It is worth noting that the position of Poulydamas in the *Iliad* was also built on his 'good advice', or sensible political speeches in the Assembly (see above, p. 311 with n. 19). Cf. also below, pp. 330–334.

[27] Of course in Homer we find hints of feasts that do not directly fit into the reality of the poetic world and may be part of historical phenomena known to the poet. In *Od.* XIV 245–252 the Cretan, Odysseus' fictional alter ego, invites the members of his volunteer war squad for a six-day feast, which I would call an 'integrative feast' (generally cf. Murray 1983*b*, 197–198; 1983*c*, 260–261; Van Wees 1995, 169–170). In addition, we are dealing with an individual from the *kakoi* group, who has only himself to thank for his social promotion (see above, p. 310). This situation fits well in Dietler's 'empowering feast' category.

[28] Cf. the scene in which Telemachus requests that the suitors leave his father's house (*Od.* I 374–380; II 139–145; tr. R. Lattimore) and 'do [their] feasting elsewhere,

birth and heredity. Membership in the group—which comprised, as one ought to recall, both *aristoi* and *kakoi*—is obtained solely by unanimous acceptance of all the members of the group. This is why Astyanax, the son and grandson of a king, has reason to fear rejection.[29] I think that this is the poet's way of signalling that admittance into the group of co-banqueters depends on current social status or the individual's current fortune. I also believe that the scene in which a son of one of the 'companions' sends the orphan away not only hints at the exclusive and prestigious status of such banqueting groups, but additionally points to a mechanism of socialization that is carried out in such meetings. A boy must be trained for full membership by his father (or a male next of kin) bringing him to adult feasts and teaching him proper etiquette, as well as commensal competences, the most important of which might have been, as the epigram on the Pithekoussan 'Cup of Nestor' indicates, cultural skills and especially those concerning poetry. Regardless of his origins, a boy deprived of such support will not be a partner for the banqueting élite.

* * *

In the fourth chapter, I argued that the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* already knew the technicalities and organizational rules of the banquet that we should identify as the symposion, as known from later sources. It turns out that the poet was well aware of the social aspects of the symposion and the special connection between this type of feast and the form of political organization and social practice, which also corresponds to our knowledge of the symposion derived from sources from the archaic period. In the images recalled above, we can see an egalitarian feast of a group of men ceremonially drinking alcohol together,[30] a group which greedily guards its integrity. On the one

eating up [their] own possessions, taking turns, household by household' (cf. above, pp. 226–227). It is noteworthy that the participants of this most likely egalitarian (potentially) reciprocal feast do not hold any judicial or political functions in their community. Moreover, they form a heterogeneous group composed of individuals who vary considerably in social status and wealth. Feasts of this kind also do not correspond to the social ideal formulated by the poet.

[29] The seeming inadequacy of this scene to the social standing of the Trojan prince made Aristarchus remove its key verses (*Il.* XXII 487–489) from the text of the *Iliad*. Cf. *Iliad VI*, p. 158. N. Richardson (comm. *ad Il.* XXII 489; ibid., p. 160) explains Andromache's fears with the possible competition of other lines of the royal house of Troy.

[30] Importantly, young Astyanax begs for wine, not for food (*Il.* XX 494–495). It is collective consumption of large amounts of wine that constitutes a prestigious distinguishing feature of the élite circle of banqueters here.

hand, it integrates the successful *kakoi* (an excellent example of such a person is found in one of the fictitious stories of Odysseus as the Cretan, son of Castor, summarized above) by inviting them to feasts of the 'nobles', and on the other hand, it excludes the members of the élite who failed for some reason. It is therefore a feast that already stimulates 'natural selection' within the Greek élite by Homeric times, much like the archaic symposion in my working hypothesis presented at the beginning of this book (1.1). In other words, it needs to be said that the reality implied in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* clearly shows a new type of social élite that fully deserves to be called an aristocracy.

In Chapter 4 we have also seen that Homer had a negative opinion of the moral consequences of the symposion (4.4.2). As I have demonstrated above, the poet brought to life a social ideal whose key feature was the creation of an impassable dividing line between *agathoi* and *kakoi*. In the poems, this ideal found expression chiefly in the image of the ideal 'royal banquet'. It seems very probable that the ideal was created primarily in reaction to the social and political implications of the symposion, that is, in reaction to the formation and mode of functioning (including the lifestyle) of the archaic aristocracy proper, which emerged as a result of the mingling, *inter alia* at symposia, of the 'nobles' with the élite of the 'worthless' and which constantly renewed itself in the same way.

It is not hard to see that the Homeric ideal is very close to what we have seen in Theognis and in the Theognidean *Sylloge*. It is therefore generally identical with the aristocratic ideal of the developed archaic period, but also largely consistent with the social ideal of Hesiod's *Works and Days*. Already in Homer's time, the inherent tensions and the conflicts potentially resulting from these ideals, associated with the social structure of the *polis*, must have been manifest. The answers to the problems presented by all the authors mentioned above were somewhat similar and referred to the ideal of a community in which everyone knew their place (Hesiod was perhaps the only one to quite clearly specify the conditions of morally 'acceptable' social advancement).[31] This is additional proof that, from the very beginning, the dominant trait of *polis* life in the archaic period, a trait many thinkers have found disturbing, was the considerable vertical social mobility of the citizens.

[31] See above, pp. 25–26.

One last remark must be made. Considering the Homeric ideal, we must abandon the time-honoured tradition of perceiving the poet as a supporter or opponent of some social group, a spokesman for the interests of the aristocracy, people, or 'kings'.[32] Homer most likely did not work on commission but in a planned and profound way reacted to what he perceived as the ethical and political wrongs of his time.[33] Representatives of various groups and milieus of that period could find positive elements for themselves in his vision. It is another issue that the final result of his thinking process was the conclusion that the heroic ideal of the 'good old times' was a hierarchic society (and feast) headed by a good community leader. However, this was not a concept for immediate implementation, but an ideal that was discursive and intended to provoke Homer's audience to reflect on political reality and their own social and political ideals. This is well evidenced by a famous scene from the second book of the *Iliad*, in which the poet puts a kind of 'monarchical manifesto' in the mouth of Odysseus (*Il.* II 203–205; tr. R. Lattimore): 'Lordship for many is no good thing. Let there be one ruler'. For lack of other arguments, the hero resorts to the use of brutal force with the *kakoi* (ll. 198–199) after Agamemnon, in whose name he speaks, commits another in his series of foolish acts, determining the tragic plot of the *Iliad*. In the passage in which the divide between the 'people of the *dēmos*' and 'kings and eminent men' (to whom Odysseus speaks with 'kind words', ll. 188–189) is at its most extreme, the poet lets us see the limits of this ideal.[34]

[32] Such an approach played a significant role in the studies on Homer's attitude to Dionysus, in which the poet was attributed an aristocratic approach, seemingly adverse to the 'popular' god of wine. Cf. above, p. 241. See also recently Seaford (2006) 27 (Dionysus' marginality in Homer as stemming from a view of the world that 'consciously or unconsciously, expresses the interests of a social group, in this case the aristocratic clan, whose ideas of heroism and glory are far removed from work on the land').

[33] Above we have seen (pp. 56–57 n. 144) that even Theognis, erroneously considered an ultra-conservative aristocrat, analyses the social situation of his time in a manner that is both involved and detached, looking much deeper into the causes of the wrongs of society than just current political disputes, condemning representatives of certain moral and social pathologies regardless of their social standing and their pedigree.

[34] Generally, on Homer's political thought, see Raaflaub (1989) and (2000) 29–33 (cf. Hammer 2002). On the ambiguity of Thersites' episode in the *Iliad*, see, e.g., Rose (1997) 163–164.

6.4 HYPOTHESIS: THE DARK AGES, THE RISE OF THE *POLIS*, AND THE BIRTH OF GREEK ARISTOCRACY

The reader of this book has noticed that, in discussing the rise of the symposion, I make no reference to the relatively abundant testimonies of wine consumption and feasting in the Mycenaean period.[35] In some spheres of life in 'early Greece' (especially in religion and the poetic tradition) we must consider the possibility that some aspects of the culture of the Mycenaean world indeed survived throughout the EIA. Meanwhile, we must assume that the fall of the Mycenaean civilization marked a dramatic watershed in the complex matter of socio-political relations,[36] including forms of élite commensality, and that the Dark Ages were a time of profound change and radical innovation.

The rapid growth of the archaeological source base for the Greek EIA did not decisively illuminate this period.[37] The answers to even the most basic of general historical questions remain uncertain. For a historian of 'early Greece', I think two main problems are closely interconnected: (1) issues concerning the assessment of the degree of social stratification of Aegean communities after the fall of the Mycenaean palaces,[38] and (2) the nature of the process that ended the Dark

[35] On this subject see the studies recently collected in the volume *The Mycenaean Feast* edited by Wright (2004) and in the collection *Food, Cuisine and Society in Prehistoric Greece* edited by Halstead and Barrett (2004), which takes a broader historical perspective (from the late Neolithic to the end of the Mycenaean period). Cf. also general sketches by Palmer (1997) and Wright (1997). Among detailed studies, see e.g. Säflund (1980) and the recent survey by Marazzi (1994).

[36] Cf. e.g. the recent discussion by Crielaard (2011).

[37] The most important syntheses for this period are: the very outdated book by Desborough (1972); a supplemented edition of the old work by Snodgrass (2000) [1971]; a synthesis of the Protogeometric period by Lemos (2002); a supplemented edition of the synthesis of the Geometric period by Coldstream (2003) [1977]; the book by Dickinson (2006); and an excellent collection of papers edited by Deger-Jalkotzy and Lemos (2006). Cf. also important sketches by Coulson (1990), Whitley (2001) 77–101, and Thomas and Conant (1999). Despite the passage of time, chapters from the book of Starr (1961) 77–186, are still inspiring. The long-announced *Companion* to the Dark Ages by Ian Morris (ed.) has not yet appeared, but the rich two-volume collection edited by Mazarakis Ainian (2011) fills this gap to some extent.

[38] Besides the books listed in the previous footnote, important works on this issue include *inter alios* Finley (1988) [1954]; Qviller (1981); Donlan (1985*b*); (1989); (1998); Blome (1991); Whitley (1991*b*); and Hall (2007) 59–66.

Ages and paved the way for the new developments of the archaic period.

Considering the phenomena investigated in this work, the discussion of these problems can be limited to questions regarding the character of the EIA élites and the nature of their relations with other free members of local communities. In this manner, a historical 'point of departure' for the rise of the symposion can be set. Aiming at the hypothetical reconstruction of the origins of the symposion, my historical model must therefore rely on the acceptance of a general vision of the Dark Ages. Below, I start by presenting such a vision, based not only on the results of archaeological research of this period but also, departing from certain premises of a retrospective nature, trying to view the analysed processes in the light of their 'point of arrival' in the second half of the eighth and seventh century BC. Only later do I propose an explanatory model, elucidating in greater detail one of the aspects of the transformation of the end phase of the EIA—the rise of the symposion in its connections with the emerging *polis*.

* * *

From a certain viewpoint it can be said that the tone of the ongoing discussion on the character of the EIA was set several decades ago by Anthony Snodgrass, as he tried to explain the mechanism of changes in the eighth century 'structural revolution'.[39] In brief, Snodgrass strongly emphasized the extent of demographic decline in the Sub-Mycenaean period and throughout the Dark Ages, and in this context he pointed to the exponential population growth, which in his opinion took place in MG II and gained momentum in the LG period. In order to explain this upsurge, Snodgrass turned to a hypothesis according to which one of the aspects of economic decline in the Dark Ages was the restriction of agriculture in favour of pastoralism, while the return of an agrarian economy at the end of the Dark Ages triggered the aforementioned demographic boom.

[39] See Snodgrass (1980) 18–25; (1987) chap. VI, and esp. Snodgrass (2006*b*) [1977].

[40] In his early book, Morris (1987) esp. 156–167, was radically against the idea of sudden demographic growth. According to Morris, the demographic aspect of the 'revolution of the eighth century' was an illusion resulting from a change in burial customs and from extending the right to 'formal burials' to individuals from social groups that had previously been deprived of it. See in general above, pp. 249–250.

Many scholars, including his disciple Ian Morris, later questioned both elements of Snodgrass's position. In particular, they criticized the demographic data he utilized.[40] But in my opinion, Snodgrass's conclusions remain convincing if we moderate the dramatic scale of the phenomenon he postulated.[41] I accept the historicity of the significant demographic growth in the eighth century. At the same time, however, I agree with Morris that the scale of growth in the number of burials at this time in Athens did not correspond exactly to objective demographic changes, but was also the result of 'ritual emancipation' (i.e. giving access to archaeologically recognizable forms of burials) of social groups previously invisible to us. But, unlike Morris, I believe that 'formal burials' did not become available to the entire body of citizens, but only to the new élite, roughly speaking to the aristocracy proper and those aspiring to this status. In other words, I consider objective demographic processes to be historically connected to new social phenomena in the eighth century to be dealt with below. At the same time, I suspect that in both spheres (demography and social changes) the testimony of eighth-century tombs is only a *terminus ante quem* for these processes, or the moment in which the previously 'covert' changes left traces in the archaeological record, consisting *inter alia* in the ritual 'consummation' of new privileges by the newly promoted members of lower social strata (see below). The changes in demography and social relations, interpreted this way, seem to correspond to the period of the changes in élite forms of banqueting studied in this book (see also below).

While accepting the idea of a significant demographic rise in the wake of the Dark Ages, I am not persuaded by the hypothesis of a radical change in the economy and the transition of the Dark Ages societies to a largely pastoral economy eventually leading to the adoption of a nomadic lifestyle by a part of the population.[42] This is

[41] Snodgrass's calculations were interestingly modified, referring to more recent bibliography and adding his own statistics, by Tandy (1997) 46–58 (tables 1–11). Cf. especially Scheidel (2003); also recently Morris (2009) 66. An interesting confirmation of significant demographic growth in the eighth century is provided by the analysis of architectural remains in Zagora on Andros (Green 1990, esp. 41–46). The same is indicated by the increase in settlement density in PG and Geometric periods, visible in surface surveys of southern and central Greece.

[42] Snodgrass (1980) 35–38. Cf. also the critical opinion on this concept by Dickinson (2006) 98–103 and Hall (2007) 61.

a fundamental matter for my vision of the Dark Ages and for my model of the rise of the symposion.

If things were indeed as Snodgrass has suggested, we would have to imagine the natural consequences of such a state for the structure of Greek societies of this period, taking Roman Italy as a parallel. 'In the Mediterranean, the shepherd was always the main enemy of the farmer. . . . [L]arge herds . . . were a constant threat to their neighbouring arable fields and to the communal pastures . . . , which were crucial elements of small and self-sufficient landownership, whose agricultural activities went hand in hand with breeding a pair of oxen and a dozen or so sheep'.[43] In other words, had the economy of continental Greece of the EIA gone from agriculture to extensive pastoralism, one might expect changes in social structure and political relations, headed toward a weakening of the free peasantry and significant reinforcement of small groups of a property-based élite (owners of large herds) surrounded by a network of free and un-free dependents, as well as various supporters belonging to the group of rightful members of local communities.

Meanwhile, at the end of the historical processes under consideration here, during the final phase of the formation of the archaic Greek world, in a large part of the Aegean we find ideologically egalitarian citizen-communities dominated by an aristocratic élite. Since there was most likely no social revolution along the way, we must assume that the free peasants were an important social group throughout the Dark Ages, playing some political role in their communities and whose means of subsistence and social position were tied to tilling their own land. A basic political principle of the archaic period, according to which only a landowner could be a citizen,[44] also implies the significance of minor landed property in the previous era. A radical turn to pastoralism in the Dark Ages simply does not fit with this picture.

[43] Ziolkowski (2000) 97–99 (quote on p. 98) on the essential meaning of *Lex Licinia Sextia de modo agrorum* from 367 BC. (a concept largely based on the still unpublished research of Jerzy Kolendo). See also below, n. 45, on 'mixed farming' in Greece.

[44] See briefly, above, p. 24.

[45] In English this type of economy is called 'mixed farming'. This practice, which dominated in Greece before and after the EIA consists in combining the cultivation of cereals and vegetables with horticulture (the olive tree and the grapevine) and small-scale animal husbandry. Cf. generally Dickinson (2006) 102–103.

Our point of departure for a general vision of the EIA should be the assumption that while the Aegean experienced profound depopulation, the region's economy maintained its predominantly agrarian character.[45] The matter is somewhat more complicated with two remaining features of the crisis of the Dark Ages that are generally acknowledged by scholars. Archaeological material clearly points to this region's isolation from the outside world (indicated, at least in part, by the scarcity of imports in burials) and the low level of social diversification within the investigated communities (modest houses with only one chamber, minor differences between houses within the individual settlements, etc.). There are several sites that stand out from this general picture, indicating that both the contacts of the local élites with the outside world and their position within the communities may have been stronger. In particular, I am thinking about the testimony of the 'Heroon of Lefkandi'.

I have already mentioned that an important feature of the Greek Dark Ages was local diversity, which manifested itself in forms of burials, art, etc. It seems that in some regions of the Aegean, political relations, especially the role played by a relatively narrow group of élites, may have developed in various directions but I suspect that these differences should be analysed in terms of quantity rather than quality. In the more favourable conditions of some regions, EIA élites may have been able to achieve what élites elsewhere could not afford. I think, however, that the nature of the relations between the élite and the free population of a given region were more or less similar almost everywhere, or at least in areas where the *poleis* later emerged.[46] Namely, the representatives of the élite dominated the local communities but this domination was not absolute or undisputed. In completely exceptional cases, an extraordinary concentration of wealth and power may have occurred, as in the case of the 'hero' from Lefkandi, but this very instance illustrates how irregular and exceptional such a situation must have been.

Therefore, I generally assume that when a balance was regained after the fall of the Mycenaean civilization, Aegean Greeks lived in very small rural communities, in which agriculture constituted the

[46] On the geographic limits of this region see below, p. 327.

[47] Scattered around the Acropolis, independent socio-political units seem to have coexisted in SM and PG Athens (cf. Lemos 2006, 524). This picture seems to change in the ninth century BC.

foundation of the economy. These communities were isolated from the outside world and small enough to stay out of each other's way at a supra-local scale.[47] The lack of labour in depopulated Greece must have, in effect, led to a certain stabilization, since border conflicts over arable land must have been extremely rare.[48] Farmers who worked their own land would have had personal freedom and a voice in community matters. Present in such communities were 'big men', non-hereditary leaders who built their informal position on charisma and success. Members of the local élite (perhaps in some places they were descendants of regional Mycenaean élites) probably had more land and more cattle than others, competed with each other for the status of informal leader, and the most ambitious possibly improved their position, for example, by raiding close and distant neighbours in order to obtain livestock and sometimes, in certain regions, undertaking maritime pirate raids.[49] For powerful Euboeans, long-range maritime trade and guest-friendships with their Oriental peers would be another source of wealth and prestige.[50] Now, although I accept the concept of the domination of 'big men' in the society of the Dark Ages as formulated by many scholars (*inter alios* Bjørn Qviller, Walter Donlan, and James Whitley), I cannot agree with the idea that the military function of such individuals played a major role in the life of their communities throughout the EIA. I think that, while in the first phase of the crisis, migrations and raids called for effective defence and strong military leadership, later on these needs were not as strong. As a result, the role of specialized warriors gradually decreased and their military successes (plundering raids and piracy) became detached from the community's sphere of activities and were no longer directly associated with its interests.[51]

Returning to the problem of feasting in the Dark Ages, it is worth noting that 'big men' most likely held three types of feasts in this period. First, they had to organize banquets for the community of free

[48] Many scholars have noted a clear lack of wars over land in Homeric poems, which is striking, especially given the repeated references to conflicts over herds (cf. next footnote). See, for instance, Finley (1988) [1954], 95.

[49] Cf. in general, Jackson (1993).

[50] See the excellent treatment of this subject by Lane Fox (2011) *passim*.

[51] Although I assume that élites of this kind and their particularly outstanding representatives may have assembled 'companies' of comrades-in-arms, I reject Donlan's view, according to which entire communities were organized in non-kinship structures of an essentially military nature, directed by charismatic leaders.

members of their societies or for a part of this community, or for some leaders of kinship-based and non-kinship-based groups, into which the free peasants were divided. Individual leaders intending to surpass their rivals may have held such feasts, but several members of the élite could also join forces to offer an all the more lavish reception for representatives of a lower social group. Second, individual war leaders dined with their current or potential supporters or comrades in arms, particularly when preparing for a campaign or consuming its fruits. Third, leaders of élite families sometimes had to feast in their own circle, perhaps following the rules of reciprocity and competing in economic commensal flamboyance also in other ways. Such internal 'power plays' within the élite may have translated into power relations in the entire community. And all of these types of feasts had to coexist simultaneously in the same phases of the history of the EIA,[52] jointly contributing to the creation and maintenance of a complex network of social and political relations.

If one were to apply the theoretical categories used in this work to the types of feasts (which are hypothetical, but very probable) of EIA élites, the first type would be classified as 'empowering feasts', although from a different viewpoint it could be an example of 'transgressive feasts' that provided temporary ritual integration of unequal social groups. The second type approaches the category of 'patron-role feasts', since the relations between comrades-in-arms may have been—although not necessarily—more long-lasting than a single military campaign. At the same time, however, they could be 'segregative feasts', with their essence defined by the exclusion of 'strangers' and the consolidation of the group by symbolic means. This type also bore traits of a 'transgressive feast', since the brotherhood-in-arms was forged there, most probably as a result of the consumption of large amounts of wine and meat, and the temporary suspension of inequality between the leader and his 'company'. As far as models go, the third type of feast, being both 'diacritical' and 'transgressive', bears the closest similarity to the symposion.[53]

[52] Once again it is worth stressing that it is impossible to evolutionally attribute the different types to different stages of development (and continuously increasing social stratification) of the communities in this period.

[53] Cf. above, Sections 0.4 and 1.4.2. [54] Cf. briefly above, pp. 4 and 13 with n. 25.

As we remember, Oswyn Murray's theory of the rise of the symposion linked this type of feast with the second of the above categories (although in his reasoning the relationship of the symposion to the third, which I have distinguished, is not entirely clear).[54] I believe, however, that the symposion was not a natural, let alone direct, continuation of any of them, although practice and the system of values of the latter two significantly contributed to the formation of this completely new type of feast.

* * *

In an excellent article published a few years ago, Erich Kistler and Christoph Ulf applied Dietler's theory of 'commensal politics' to the study of archaeological material from Ag. Triada on the Athenian Kerameikos (Kistler and Ulf 2005). They assumed that between *c.*950 and *c.*850 BC. Athenian society was dominated by small and rather egalitarian groups under the informal leadership of local 'big men'. They argued that in such a society the most important ways of competing for the status of leader of the entire community were Dietler's 'empowering feasts', allowing an individual to demonstrate wealth and generosity, and thereby leadership qualities. Kistler and Ulf briefly suggested that in *c.*850 BC this situation began to change and this type of feast was gradually replaced by another, namely Dietler's 'patron-role feast'. This type constituted a more formalized mechanism that permitted the maintenance and reinforcement of 'social capital' (not its acquisition) already in possession of the leader, whose status within the community was well-established (hereditary?).

In my previous discussion I tried to prove that from the end of the ninth century BC we can already postulate the development of the symposion, a banquet belonging to the third of Dietler's categories—the 'diacritical feast'.[55] We can of course hesitate over whether Athenian élites of the Protogeometric and early Geometric periods had the custom of organizing 'empowering feasts' or 'patron-role feasts', but, as I have just concluded, both types of feasts (or rather feasts which partly and in some aspects fit into Dietler's classification) must have coexisted in the EIA, responding to the various needs of the local élites of continental Greece. At this point, what is of key importance to me is that no later than the MG II phase (for the Athenian commensal customs discussed above) and in the LG period

[55] See above, Sections 5.3–5.4.

(for testimony of the 'Cup of Nestor') one finds refined feasts of a private and, so to say, 'centripetal' nature, focused on the interactions between members of the élite and only indirectly associated with the relations between the élite and the inferior social groups within a given community. In practice it must have been a real breakthrough and a culmination of a certain historical process.

The nature of the rivalry between potential community leaders changed from concrete to much more symbolic forms—both in terms of the means of the contending individuals and of their competences. On the one hand, instead of constant access to the great herds of cattle needed to feed the greatest possible number of (potential) supporters, the new type of feast required access to wine, which was cheaper and easier to obtain. On the other hand, cultural competences (elegant wine consumption and knowledge and skill in reciting poetry) replaced the public manifestation of the individual's economic and political power.[56]

One might ask how this fundamental change should be interpreted. What does it tell us about Greek society of the ninth and eighth centuries BC? In other words, how should we understand the social function of the rising symposion?

Possibly the most prominent result of the revolutionary change in the dining customs of the Aegean élites was a significant lowering of the economic threshold at which the individual qualified for participation in the élite feast as a rightful member of the group. Another result, closely connected with the latter, was the possibility of rivalry on equal terms between all banqueters regardless of differences in origin, social position, or economic status. A long-term consequence of the rise of the symposion was the emergence of the very special collective ethos of this group, both egalitarian and agonistic, based primarily on shared cultural values and a certain 'symbolic code' adopted by all its members. However, as we consider the circumstances of the rise of the symposion in the historical context of the ninth and eighth century BC, the question that must come to mind is *cui bono*? I believe that what comes into play are the vital interests of a newly emergent social group, a new type of élite that fully deserves to be called an aristocracy.

[56] Moreover, such a 'centripetal' feast would in its very form of organization radically and ostentatiously break with the past experiences of the entire community: ceremonial consumption of wine instead of wine drinking connected with the consumption of large amounts of meat; and, additionally, the nocturnal time frame, contrasting with the more natural and practical custom of feasting by day.

Keeping in mind the concept of the socio-political relations of the EIA formulated above, we must imagine a historical turning point in which this very stable world began to undergo dramatic changes. Even if the demographic growth of the eighth or ninth century was in fact less significant than Snodgrass originally suggested,[57] the consequences of an initially minor change for the whole 'system' must have been enormous. As one recalls, the relative stability of the Aegean in the Dark Ages probably arose from the fact that small agrarian populations lived in isolation from one another and maintained a certain balance. As soon as some of them began to grow,[58] long-forgotten conflicts between local communities resurfaced. I envision this whole 'systemic revolution' to be the effect of the 'peer polity interaction' rule formulated by Colin Renfrew.[59] From this point on, I focus on the 'macro region' that can be called 'Central Greece' (Morris 1998, 10–36, with figs. 1–2). It encompassed Argolid, Corinthia, Attica, Boeotia, Euboea, Chalcidice (and later Propontis), the Aegean Islands, and the coast of Asia Minor all the way to Rhodes (see Map 5.1). A. Snodgrass described them as 'advanced' regions of the Greek world already in the PG period (Snodgrass 1971, 374–376). The greater part of this 'macro region' was strongly affected by the collapse of the Mycenaean civilization. All its elements had easy access to maritime trade routes and constituted a considerably homogeneous communication network. They could, therefore, influence one another at a supralocal level according to the principle of communicating vessels. There is much to indicate that this was where the dramatic historical processes under scrutiny began.

[57] Cf. above, pp. 319–320 with notes.

[58] We can, like Snodgrass (see above), look for a mechanism that triggered this growth, or assume that as a result of long-term demographic processes growth exceeded a certain limit at the given moment and began to undermine the previous socio-political system.

[59] Renfrew (1986). Cf. Snodgrass (2006*c*) [1986], who, following Renfrew, discussed historical phenomena occurring in 750–650 BC. I propose to move the upper limit of these systemic changes to some point in the ninth century BC. Cf. also the next footnote.

[60] The changes, which scholars associate with the rise of the *poleis*, and which they place in the eighth century, are primarily: the aforementioned population growth in better-investigated centres; the appearance of 'border' sanctuaries marking the edges of the new citizen communities; the rise and increase in importance of 'international' sanctuaries; change in the place of deposition of prestigious metal objects from burials to sanctuaries; the birth of the phalanx; interest in the 'heroic past' (emergence of the cult of heroes and of great epic works about heroes); in association with the latter, the

In short, a locally activated change mechanism forces the neighbours, and later all communities of the larger network, to adopt similar solutions (or introduce further innovations) in reaction to the accelerating systemic changes.[60] It can be expected that the most important aspect of this phenomenon, triggered by the local consequences of the demographic growth that began to take effect at some point in the ninth century BC, was a kind of arms race, making more and more Aegean communities seek similar solutions in a world that suddenly became destabilized. As we shall see briefly, for the élite feast and Aegean élites the results must have been dramatic.

I believe that we should envision two complementary phenomena in the repertoire of possible responses to the new situation.

First, both archaeology and later Greek tradition suggest the appearance, in various parts of the Aegean, of the phenomenon of synoecism, consisting in the peaceful or forced merging of several hitherto separate political communities into one entity that was stronger than each isolated. We can imagine that in connection to this there emerged an urgent need to integrate the local élites into the unified élite of the new political entity.[61] The new type of feast, which disposed of the objective differences between the individual banqueters, would have served this end very well. However, processes of this type most likely emerged no sooner than in the final decades of the eighth century,[62] so from the point of view adopted here they do not

'appropriation' of the heroic past (cult ceremonies held on the site of Mycenaean burials and erecting sanctuaries on the spot of Mycenaean centres) to cater to the current political needs of the *poleis*, *inter alia*, as a way to 'appropriate land' (e.g., in border disputes with neighbours). However, one must remember (cf. above) that some of these phenomena are material, or even monumental traces of collective activities of communities, which must have reached the state of readiness to undertake such joint actions much earlier. Once again, it turns out that the historical phenomenon of the eighth century is no more than a *terminus ante quem* for profound changes in the life of the Aegean communities. Somewhat similarly Snodgrass (2006*g*) [1991], *passim*.

[61] An earlier rivalry between the élites of neighbouring communities could explain many of the sudden changes taking place in Athens from the ninth century onwards in the symbolism of prestigious ostentation. Cf. above, Section 5.3.

[62] Cf. most likely the case of Zagora on Andros, abandoned peacefully at the end of the eighth century. Its population probably moved (or was forced to relocate) to Palaeopolis, which later became the urban centre of Andros (cf. briefly Cambitoglou 1970, 309). On the situation in Attica and the possible course of the process of its political integration, with Athens as the centre, see generally Whitley (1991*a*) esp. 54–60.

explain the emergence of the symposion, but rather one of the aspects of its subsequent success.

Most likely earlier, the second process I postulate is the general growth of importance and social standing of free peasants with respect to the local élites of the EIA. This group must have been the one most affected by the previously noted demographic growth. They also seem to have benefitted most from the long-term effects of the resulting 'systemic change', in two different but closely related ways. On the one hand, the free peasants were the ones most interested in further changes, destabilizing the old system, above all, in internal colonization of their territory, as well as an external colonization that entailed conflicts with neighbouring communities over arable land (when land was already scarce or when the neighbours had better land), and/or over trade routes and other strategically important geographical entities.[63] On the other hand, in this increasingly unstable situation, it was this group that became the backbone and shield of the local communities. Wars became more frequent and adversaries more determined.[64] It is the intensity of conflicts in the ninth and eighth centuries (the synoecisms, which I have discussed above, are from this point of view nothing but examples of wars that were successfully avoided) that offers an explanation of the well-known fact that the overwhelming majority of centres thriving in the Dark Ages did not continue into the early archaic period (which is why we only know them by their Modern Greek names: Lefkandi, Zagora, Koukounaries on Paros, Grotta on Naxos, Emporio on Chios, etc.). A testimony to the destructive scale of the conflicts of this time may be the recently discovered *polyandrion* in Paroikia on Paros,

[63] Above all else, for many families the demographic growth and better living conditions increased the number of heirs in need of their own plot of arable land—if only to retain full political membership of their local communities.

[64] The so-called First Messenian War (which ended in Spartan victory, most likely before *c.*710 BC), as well as the conquest and destruction of Asine and Nauplia by Argos (probably at more or less the same time), and the still mysterious Lelantine War on Euboea (towards the end of the eighth century) are probably only the most spectacular (and late) examples of territorial wars, which on a smaller scale must have dominated the Greek political landscape over many preceding decades. The Euboean conflict over the fertile Lelantine plain between Chalkis and Eretria (earlier Lefkandi) must have continued with long breaks following the final decades of the ninth century and the supralocal success of Argos was already well advanced by the time of the construction of the Argive Heraion *c.*725 BC (see in general Morgan and Whitelaw 1991).

where approximately one hundred warriors who had fallen together were buried at the turn of the eighth and seventh century (see Zaphiropoulou 2002, 283—284). Assuming that the war in which they were killed was a local clash associated with the process of political unification of the island, one must additionally note the striking fact that this is a cemetery of the ultimately victorious side of the conflict.

Under such circumstances, it became crucial to be able to bring forth the greatest possible number of warriors for defence of the home territory or expansion elsewhere. Free peasants going to war en masse became the key to success, or even to the survival, of many Aegean communities—a fact which must have stimulated the prestige and political promotion of this group.

This does not mean that I hold an idea akin to the old concept of the 'hoplite revolution', according to which the archaic *polis* experienced a collapse of the aristocracy's monopoly of power due to changes in combat tactics, which promoted the so-called 'hoplite class'.[65] Following Kurt Raaflaub, I rather assume that 'The land-owning farmers from the very beginning formed an integral element, both militarily and politically, in the evolving *polis*'.[66] Raaflaub attributes a decisive role in this process to the heritage of political competencies by the free peasantry of the EIA,[67] whereas I, recognizing their certain influence on the fate of the communities in that period, consider the changes that began in the ninth and eighth centuries to be the true point of departure and the 'new beginning' for the emergence of the *polis* understood as a form of political organization radically different from everything that preceded it. From this point of view, the significance of the military seems fundamental.

In previous studies on the phenomenon of the phalanx, too much weight has been put on two technical issues: the manner and time of the appearance of elements of hoplite armour in Greece (its particular elements were gradually adopted by élite-warriors; see below);[68] and the differences in the combat technique between the dense and uniformly armed phalanx attested in sources from the second half of

[65] The debate on this subject was reopened by Snodgrass (2006*d*) [1965]; cf. Snodgrass (2006*e*) [1993], with more recent bibliography (the earlier discussion is profusely cited by Detienne (1999) [1968], 157–158 n. 1). Cf. also below, n. 73.

[66] Raaflaub (1997*b*) 57; in general, cf. also Raaflaub (2005).

[67] Cf. previous note and Raaflaub (1993).

[68] This has been very well demonstrated already by Snodgrass (2006*d*) [1965].

the seventh century onwards, and the formation that emerges from the texts of Homer or Tyrtaeus and the existence of which, I believe, we have reason to place in the eighth century (a somewhat loosened line and/or less uniform formation). I would argue that the differences observed by scholars between the 'early' and the 'developed' phalanx are of secondary importance.[69] To talk about the phalanx in the proper sense, it suffices to assume the existence of a densely concentrated and well-coordinated infantry formation whose aim was to outnumber the enemy in a specific place on the battlefield. I imagine that, in such a formation, free peasantry, initially armed only with the essential and cheapest arms and munitions (say, clubs and stones), constituted the majority. For the community's military effectiveness, the most important factor was their readiness for combat en masse. This, in turn, must have brought about substantial political consequences. In order to be certain that the peasants would report for war every time the community was in need, the local élites had to share basic political competences with them,[70] especially the right to vote for or against war. I would therefore not identify the process of formation of the *polis* with the 'hoplite revolution', but with the 'phalanx revolution'. The competence of the people to vote for war became a matter of essence in this process of formation, which was, in my view, identical with the original function of the popular assembly.[71] The revolutionary nature of the change described has easily escaped the attention of scholars, who correctly assume that the

[69] Just like the fact that, besides such a phalanx, a particular role on the battlefield was played for some time by chariots and élite cavalry.

[70] Another incentive must have been the promise of profit in the form of spoils and—most importantly—territorial gains that offered new plots of land to divide between community members and their sons.

[71] Cf. also below, pp. 332–333 with n. 75.

[72] From *Od.* XVIII 377–379 it appears that their minimal armaments were: a shield, spears, and a bronze helmet.

[73] So, e.g., Van Wees (1992), (1994*a*) and (1994*b*); cf. also K. A. Raaflaub, cited above, nn. 66 and 67, and Raaflaub (2008); differently Latacz (1977), who imagined the Homeric phalanx as it was in much later times. My reconstruction is largely consistent with the conclusions of Raaflaub (esp. Raaflaub 2008, 474–479) who, contrary to the opinion of H. van Wees, emphasizes the significance of the masses of infantry on the Homeric battlefield. Unlike Raaflaub, I would not identify Homer's characters fighting in dense formation (including the 'representatives of the people' among the Homeric warriors) with 'protohoplites' (so Raaflaub 2005 and 2008, 479) because I believe that what was crucially important was the mass battle formation, not the armaments of its individual members. Likewise, Schwartz (2002).

phalanx at work in Homer is similar to the one in Tyrtaeus (fr. 11 W^2, ll. 4, 12, and 35; fr. 23a W^2, l. 14). It is an infantry formation consisting of representatives of the better-armed élite 'fighting in the first line' (*promachoi*)[72] and of infantry masses 'fighting nude' (*gymnētes*, *gymnomachoi*) behind them.[73] It seems clear that the substance of this formation consisted in the masses of *gymnomachoi* (without them, even the term *promachoi* would make no sense), without whom the thin first line of *promachoi* would lose its *raison d'être* and the élites would have kept fighting as before (in small groups or individually, on foot or on horseback), unable to withstand the massive 'new-style armies' of the opponent. In this connection it is also worth noting that in one place in Tyrtaeus (fr. 23a W^2 [P. Oxy 3316], l. 14: γ]υμνομάχοι προθέ[ο]ντες . . .) those 'fighting nude' take part in the attack (most likely throwing stones at the beginning of the clash and later retreating behind the *promachoi*) or perhaps they run into the gaps in the first row of fighters (in the battlefield reality of that period this must have occurred). Regardless how we choose to understand this very corrupted passage from Tyrtaeus, two important conclusions arise. First of all, the 'nude fighters' play an active and important role in battle. Second, it is clear that the *gymnomachoi* had a chance to attain distinction on the battlefield and to attract the attention of the warrior-élite (cf. also *Il.* II 365–366).[74]

This is how I envision one of the main mechanisms of the emergence of the Greek *polis* and the origins of the citizen masses at its core. The *kakoi* of the early archaic *polis* seem to have been mostly descendants and heirs of the free peasants of the EIA, lifted up by the historical processes discussed above.

One cannot forget, however, that the phenomenon of the advancement of free peasantry happened not only on a massive but also on an individual scale. This group must have been considerably stratified prior to this change. Now the door to an economic, military, and political career opened for the more ambitious and able individuals within the group,[75] once and for all setting them apart from other commoners. Such successful *kakoi* were able to enter into various

[74] Raaflaub (2008) 477, brilliantly points to the passage in the *Iliad* (XIV 379–384), which shows that the individuals considered to be the best warriors did not necessarily have the best weapons, so they may have belonged to the lower social strata.

[75] On the perspectives of a political career for 'people of the *dēmos*' in Homer, see above, pp. 311 and 313–314.

clientelistic relationships with representatives of the old élites, but could also become indispensable partners if they enjoyed prestige and had the support of a large part of their social group. Members of the élite had to deal with the completely new circumstances. Above all, they needed to solicit the votes of the citizen masses, competing more and more fiercely in public with their equals. This is well indicated by the fact that Homer uses 'telling names' such as Leiokritos, Leiodes, Peisenor, Peisandros,[76] which point to procedures for the election of officials and to the necessity of pleasing the people, but does it without being aware of their anachronistic character in the heroic world. Procedures of this type must have accompanied the *polis* from its beginnings. In this situation, the stance of the most powerful *kakoi* could be crucial for the balance of power in the *polis*, making them attractive partners for the high élite.

If I were to use Roman terms, I would say that the Greek 'patricians' quickly recognized the advantages in admitting the most eminent (but also no doubt the wealthiest) 'plebeians' into their circle. Unlike the conflict of the Roman orders, the group ethos of the former turned out to be less compelling than their individual ambitions and their spirit of political rivalry. Equally weak was the solidarity of the *kakoi* group, which, as I have already stressed, regarded the lifestyle of the élite with a mix of jealousy and hope for their own social promotion throughout the archaic period.[77] From the union of the élite of the commoners with the descendants of the EIA élite there emerged a true aristocracy.

To use another historical parallel, the case of medieval Poland may be instructive here. Its emerging nobility also included representatives of the so-called *wlodycy*, especially the wealthier ones, who at a certain point began to be obliged to serve based on *ius militare*. This 'knightly law' covered the most energetic representatives of the peasantry 'specializing' in warfare. Importantly from my point of view, this mechanism was repeated in the subsequent stages of the process of formation of Polish chivalry. Moreover, one should stress the importance of the reception of the western knightly custom and

[76] 'The one who is chosen by the people', 'The one who pleases the people', 'The one who persuades the men', 'The one who persuades the people' (*Peisistratos*, 'The one who persuades the *stratos*', i.e. the citizen army, also belongs here). See Bravo (1988); cf. briefly Bravo (1996) 532–535.

[77] See above, pp. 77–78.

[78] See Jurek (2012). Cf. above, Sections 1.1.2–3, on Greek *aristoi*.

culture for the integration of the entire warrior group, but also for distinguishing it from the masses of common people from whom a part of its members had only recently emerged.[78] Promotion to this élite circle as a result of merit in military service and the cultural dimension of integration (and separation) of the new élite allows for making the parallel with the formation process of the early archaic Greek aristocracy.

Accordingly, I suppose that in the initial stage of the functioning of the *polis* one way to secure the social and material advancement of a member of the *kakoi* was his decision to shoulder greater burdens for the citizen-community. This most likely consisted in acquiring elements of heavy armour (a helmet and/or a shield) and attempts to move forward, from the back lines of 'nude warriors' fighting in the phalanx to the front line of the *promachoi*. To be sure, the decisive factors in this matter were not only the wishes, means and political significance of those interested in such social advancement but, above all, acceptance by the aristocrats 'fighting in the first line', in other words recognition of the individual's military distinction and skills, as well as his social prestige in general, by his future comrades-in-arms.

The Homeric testimony (6.3) discussed above, as well as the eighth-century evidence from the Kerameikos, which points to a certain 'levelling' of élite burials exhibiting sympotic symbols, allows me to put forward an hypothesis concerning a complementary ground on which the social promotion of an individual took place. I believe that one of the most important integration mechanisms was the admittance of selected *kakoi* to the egalitarian social groups that feasted together.[79] A certain precedent may have been the commensal forms of (hypothetical) *Männerbunde* of the Dark Ages, military groups of brothers-in-arms centred around a leader, but feasting together in an egalitarian manner to bond in the face of wartime peril.[80] However, both the form and the function of the new type of banquet constituted a radically new social practice.

From this perspective, we can fully understand the aforementioned revolutionary features of the emerging symposion. As we remember,

[79] Of course, this was not the only way of 'sealing' one's social advancement. The most important and steady mechanism here must have been marriages between advancing *kakoi* and representatives of the old élites (and their respective offspring). Such bonds must have had an immediate effect on the composition of the convivial groupings in local communities. In general, cf. above, p. 75.

[80] Cf. esp. Murray (1983*a*) and above, p. 4 on Murray's theory of the origin of the symposion, and p. 324.

the banquet centred on drinking wine and on intellectual entertainment lowered the economic threshold for joining the group and brought objectively unequal banqueters to the same level, as they became rivals in poetry and other skills that were significant in strictly symbolic terms. For the integration of representatives of the old élite with persons of recent social advancement, this was, as it seems, an ideal solution that provided the arrivistes a chance to prove themselves successful not only on economic, political, and military grounds, but also to show eagerness in promptly accumulating necessary 'cultural capital' and passing it on to their male descendants.

However, the new type of feast also had to play the opposite role of radically distinguishing this new social group from the rest of the citizens of the *polis*, drawing the line between the 'superior' and the 'inferior' members of the citizen body, namely between the *aristoi* and the *kakoi*. This proved necessary due to the recent social promotion of the free peasantry into the circle of the wider élite, understood as all members of the citizen group (the *dēmos* or *laoi*) who were privileged compared to other inhabitants of a land.[81] This was achieved thanks to the 'diacritical' nature of the symposion, or the emphasis on the refined style of entertainment and the complicated 'cultural code' needed in order to take part. As we remember, nocturnal drinking itself progressively eliminated the citizens who had to work for a living. Later on, more elements of convivial sophistication (e.g. the custom of reclining at the feast from some point in the seventh century BC onwards) accentuated this difference even more clearly.

The special way in which convivial entertainment was organized (the circulating cup rule) made the symposion a social occasion that was as egalitarian as it was steeped in the spirit and practice of competition. It turned out to be an excellent way to integrate the new élite (and to integrate 'old' aristocracy with the 'parvenus' later on), but also to harness inherent tensions by ritualizing competition among its members. This mechanism turned out to be so effective, and the symposion thereby so attractive to its participants, that with changes of secondary importance it accompanied Greek aristocracy all the way to the classical period. It can even be said that from this point of view, since the beginning of the existence of the *polis*, the

[81] Cf. above, 1.1.2, on my definition of archaic aristocracy compared to the citizen 'nobility' in general.

symposion was—in the private sphere of the life of its élite—an indispensable complement to its public institutions.

We may be sure, however, that the heirs of the Protogeometric and Early Geometric élites did not universally applaud these new rules of the socio-political game. One should recall here the 'princely' élite of the Late Geometric period. The aberrant gigantism of the 'Dipylon vases' carries a clear political message from those striving to distinguish themselves from a wider Athenian élite. But the important thing is that they tried to do it using the same symbolic code pertaining to the symposion. This phenomenon, however, was short-lived, lasting slightly more than a single generation, from *c.*760 to *c.*720 BC, and most probably involving only a handful of Athenian noble families. The same can be said of the roughly contemporaneous, and somewhat later, 'princely' or 'heroic' burial customs in Kyme and Eretria, some of them also playing, so to say, on convivial symbolism in order to beat all other members of their respective élites in their prestigious display. Both local phenomena were, again, short-lived and doomed to extinction. The new élite, cemented among other things by the appeal of the symposion and its culture-oriented pastimes, ultimately gained the upper hand. Meanwhile, one more dissident was to enjoy a considerable success. In the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, as we remember, a curious heroic ideal of noble, sober, and hierarchical feasting involving large quantities of roasted meat, a crucial element of the imaginary 'Homeric world', might have been conceived in opposition to the new convivial fashion and to the new social values. It is fair to conclude, then, that in the history of Greek literature as well as in the history of Greek art negative reactions to the symposion, although momentary, proved as arresting and as fruitful as the prolonged and variegated artistic outcome of this institution.

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Unless otherwise important, terms, names, and designations appearing very frequently throughout the text (e.g. Aegean, Homer, Levant/Levantine, Odysseus, Orient/Oriental) have been omitted as too numerous. And so have been those insignificant and marginal to the argument of this book.

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